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Cuba, Its Institutions and Castro

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SUMMARY

When Fidel Castro assumed power in January 1959, he had--in theory at least--one major strategic goal: to improve the lot of the Cuban masses. With this end in mind, it was simple to justify such subsequent actions as the elimination of internal opposition, the methodical destruction of Cuba's pre-revolutionary institutions, and the deliberate alienation of the US. If he was to bring about economic and social justice, he needed to ensure the consolidation and perpetuation of his own rule and it was therefore necessary to liquidate, or at least reduce to a minimum, any domestic or foreign influence that might threaten his control. Although he went about this task in a seemingly haphazard fashion in the early days of his rule, his actions during that period followed one steadfast political thread, that of maximizing his popular support and minimizing his opposition.

In his zeal to remake Cuban society, he was careful to proceed only as fast as circumstances would allow, making good use of his oratorical ability to sway the masses and avoiding moves so radical that they might provoke a reaction too strong for him to handle. Rather than attempting to sweep the past aside overnight, he spent the first two years of his administration in discrediting and dismembering virtually all of Cuba's pre-revolutionary institutions. With a few laudable but futile exceptions, they tumbled before his onslaught without resistance. Because they had served the people so poorly, their passing occasioned only token outcry from a population disenchanted with its puppet legislature, powerless judiciary, corrupt military establishment, prostituted politicians, and alien Church.

Certain key historical factors made Castro's task of eliminating or emasculating Cuba's old institutions much easier. Cuba's democratic tradition dated only from 1902--barely half a century of practical experience--and was marked from the very beginning by US intervention, wholesale corruption, and a consistent tendency toward extremism and an inability to compromise. Political parties, with the exception of the Communist party, were shaped around an individual rather than a particular philosophy and this prevented the growth of strong partisan political structures capable of withstanding the test of time or of providing the flexibility needed for promoting compromise as a preferred alternative to violence.

On the other hand, violence had become such an accepted way of achieving and retaining power that Castro's use of it to liquidate any opposition constituted merely a continuation of normal political life. Moreover, Castro promised a total break with the evils of the past and thus represented the fulfillment of revolutionary ambitions which has been consistently frustrated ever since the initial struggle against Spanish domination broke out in 1868. History was clearly Castro's ally.

To replace the discarded institutions and provide a solid base for his rule, Castro developed new institutions using structures in the USSR and Eastern Europe as his models. He created the "organizations of the masses" to give every segment of the population the opportunity to be incorporated into the Revolution and to intimidate anyone who chose to remain outside. He gradually molded an entirely new administrative framework for running the country and merged three political groups--the pre-revolutionary Communist party, his own July 26 Movement, and the influential Revolutionary Directorate--into a single party that monopolized all political activity. The scope of the reorganization he brought about was so broad and its impact so pervasive that it constituted a true social revolution and not merely a typical Latin American changing of the guard.

The most significant organizational change was the creation of the mass organizations. Prior to the Revolution, there were areas in rural Cuba where the population had little or no sense of nationality. Some pockets were so remote that they could be reached only on foot or by boat or beast of burden. The inhabitants, without electricity or means of communication, were largely out of touch with any facet of national or local government and lived almost entirely outside the national economy. Castro's Revolution made them accessible through the construction of roads, exposed them to the communications media through networks of radio and television stations, and brought them government services through the establishment of schools and medical facilities. It gave them--as it did to the poor in urban areas and the lower class in general--a sense of participation in government and political life through incorporation into the mass organizations. These were special groups formed on a nationwide basis for women, students, peasants, laborers, and the public in general. Isolation or poverty were no bars to membership and all sectors of the population were urged through propaganda campaigns and social pressure to join at least one of the groups. Membership became a sign of revolutionary commitment and a requirement for political, social, or financial advancement.

Membership in the mass organizations had an important psychological side effect. It meant that, rather than waiting for some exterior force to turn the clock back and return Cuba to the pre-revolutionary era, the individual had made a conscious decision to participate in the revolutionary process, and that the first step had been taken toward acceptance of the changes that have so drastically reshaped Cuban society. It indicated the member had acknowledged--at least to himself--that conditions were such that cooperation had more advantages, or at least fewer disadvantages, than either opposition or neutral ground. The mass organizations, therefore, in addition to performing valuable substantive services for the Revolution, also functioned as a subtle means of preparing the people mentally for acceptance of the dramatic political and socio-economic shifts that Castro was bent on carrying out.

The new institutions, particularly the mass organizations, were clearly designed to complement Castro's dictatorial style of government. In general, they were loosely organized, monolithic in structure, and passive in nature. They concentrated authority and initiative at the uppermost level and placed only nominal restrictions on the man at the top. They had an inherent weakness in that they tended to curb independence and innovation and to reward bureaucratic inertia at the very time when initiative at lower levels and adaptability were critical to the success of the widespread changes being made. Bureaucrats from the provincial level on down judged it safer to implement directives from Havana without deviation rather than accept responsibility for modifying the directives to suit local conditions. The most minute decisions were often left to Castro himself, partly because he demanded it and partly because the system favored it.

When Castro in his Messianic wisdom chose to challenge on technical grounds the considered judgment of foreign agricultural experts who had spent years of research before reaching their conclusions, his opinion automatically prevailed in spite of whatever damage might occur in Cuban agriculture as a result. He could without fear of opposition commandeer large amounts of scarce resources for utopian schemes that looked good on paper but proved highly impractical in the Cuban environment. Through vibrant oratory, he could mobilize massive moral and physical support for pie-in-the-sky projects that betrayed the best interests of the population that gave so willingly and generously of its time and muscle. There arose a mammoth gap between practicality and theory, and economic pragmatism invariably fell victim to political expediency. Thus, the goal set in 1963 of producing ten million tons of sugar in 1970 was kept as a political target--Castro claimed that the "honor of the Revolution" rested on its achievement--in the face of mounting evidence that it would be economically counter-productive.

That such whims at the highest level of leadership could continue for so long is a tribute not only to the resilience of the long-suffering Cuban people and the

strength of Castro's popular appeal but also to the patience of Moscow, which continued to pour untold millions down the Cuban rathole. Although the failure of Che Guevara in Bolivia in 1967 unquestionably sparked serious introspection and some policy realignment by the Castro regime, the breaking point appears to have finally been reached in 1970 when Castro announced that the long-sought production goal would not be met. Popular disenchantment, criticism from pro-Castro technical experts abroad, and calamitous production statistics from other segments of the economy, backed up undoubtedly by stern pressure from Moscow, forced Castro to make a broad assessment not only of his policies but also of his manner of wielding the virtually unlimited power he possessed. He and his institutions were obviously not up to the task of achieving his goals.

The major changes growing out of this reappraisal included a reduction in Castro's personal intervention in the application of economic policy, greater emphasis on joint leadership at the policy-making level, a strengthening of institutional frameworks, a greater delegation of authority, and increased pragmatism in problem-solving. In public appearances, particularly those involving the handling of substantive matters, Castro flanked himself increasingly with other members of the Political Bureau, the highest decision-making body in the country, to undercut charges that he was perpetuating a personality cult. He withdrew somewhat from domestic economic matters and devoted much more of his time to foreign affairs. He spent lengthy periods abroad, visiting 20 countries--several of them twice--between November 1971 and October 1973. He paid much more attention to Soviet advice and permitted a significant increase in the influx of Soviet and East European technical experts and advisers.

He called for a revitalization and democratization of the mass organizations and this precipitated a frenzy of activity aimed at providing channels through which the masses could communicate with the leadership and allegedly could have more of a say in determining policies and regulations that directly

affected them. A process was begun which in November 1972 resulted in the restructuring of the entire governmental apparatus, bringing all ministries, offices, and agencies--many of which had been totally autonomous--under the jurisdiction of the Executive Committee of the Council of Ministers with Fidel at its head and Raul Castro as its second-in-command. The most important reorganization involved the party and this process is still in progress. It will continue until next year when the party's first congress is to be held and could represent the greatest challenge to Castro's authority since the abortive attempt in 1962 by several members of the pre-Castro Communist party to wrest control of the party from him and his Sierra Maestra guerrilla elite.

As it is currently structured, the party is governed by a 91-member Central Committee which is itself directed by an eight-man Political Bureau. Castro and the guerrilla elite have an overwhelming majority on the Central Committee and--with the single exception of President Dorticos, who was hand-picked by Castro himself--all members of the Political Bureau belong to the guerrilla elite. It was through this strong majority of unquestioning loyalty that Castro ruled supreme for so long, and it is this majority that may be reduced significantly in favor of the "old" Communists at the party congress in 1975.

The party has already undergone major changes in that the Secretariat--formerly concerned only with party housekeeping functions--has now become the organ responsible for monitoring the government's execution of all party directives. The emergence of the Secretariat as a major force in policy implementation may have been an attempt by the Central Committee minority, basically the "old" Communists, to undercut the supremacy of the Political Bureau, i.e., the supremacy of Castro himself. If so, the attempt seems to have failed, because the guerrilla elite succeeded in maintaining its original majority by claiming four of the five new seats on the expanded Secretariat.

Nevertheless, much remains to be resolved in the party and the outcome of the party congress will have an imposing effect on Cuban politics for years to come. The congress will elect a new Political Bureau and a new Central Committee and the makeup of these bodies will determine who is calling the shots in Havana. The higher the representation of "old" Communists, the more hard-pressed Castro will be to shape Cuban policies without being drawn totally into the Soviet orbit. Although his extremely heavy dependence on Soviet economic support has reduced considerably his room for maneuver, he prefers to keep the leash from Moscow taut. If he had a viable alternative, he would opt for greater independence from the USSR--total independence, if possible--and it is the realization of this possibility and preference that reinforces the "old" Communists in their efforts to gain the balance of power.

This does not mean that Castro would change his form of government if Soviet economic leverage were eliminated. He has gone far beyond the point where a return to pre-revolutionary capitalism would have been possible, and his brand of socialism will remain at least as long as he and his guerrillas retain power. Even if independent, he would maintain warm relations with Moscow just to keep his options open, but he would be much less amenable to Soviet direction and manipulation. It is primarily this Soviet influence that is compelling him to hold the congress in the first place; he has long been against it because his guerrilla elite has the most to lose and the least to gain, but Soviet insistence apparently left him no choice but to set a date.

If Castro retains his strong majority at the congress or even increases it, he will most likely continue to govern as he does now, making few additional fundamental changes unless forced to do so by the demands of the economy. The frenzy of reorganization that began in late 1970 will then have run its course. If, however, he perceives the possibility of a significant loss of representation by his guerrilla elite, he may be tempted to conduct another purge of "old" Communists as he did in 1962

and 1968, and his relations with Moscow will suffer accordingly. Such a purge would be feasible because he still enjoys the staunch loyalty of the armed forces and state security apparatus. With his main opponents thus cowed, he could control completely the congress' actions.

A reading of the situation at present indicates that, because he dominates the body that presumably will be responsible for organizing the congress (i.e., the Secretariat), Castro will have little trouble retaining his grip on the party reins even if the "old" Communists do achieve a modest increase in representation. As the congress approaches, however, the pressures from Moscow and the maneuverings of the "old" Communists are bound to increase with the expectation that significant gains can be engineered at the expense of the guerrilla elite. Until the congress actually convenes, therefore, Castro may be much more willing than he has been in the past to take advantage of opportunities to decrease his reliance on Soviet support and expand his contacts with the West. He has given no sign that he would willingly pass the baton of leadership on to someone else, and it is safe to assume that if he believed his position to be threatened he would seize an opportunity to strengthen it. The Soviet-sponsored process of institutionalization that is gradually building limits all around Castro may already have convinced him that such a threat indeed exists.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Government, Castro Style

In a democracy, domestic politics is basically a matter of give and take, whether it be the "ins" striving to remain in, or the "outs" endeavoring to unseat the incumbents. Both the incumbents and the opposition are subject to pressures from a multitude of sources that must be obliged to some extent if valuable support is to be preserved. In many countries of Latin America, for example, the Roman Catholic Church is a key element in political life. Student and youth organizations, labor unions, the press, cultural and consumer organizations, the military establishment, large industrial corporations, chambers of commerce, political parties, the legislature, and the judiciary are other examples of institutions that must be taken into consideration by political leaders responsible for the complex process of government. In a democratic system, these institutions and pressure groups theoretically are given the widest opportunity, within reason, to express their desires and make their opinions known so that the conduct of government can reflect as much as possible the will of the people.

In Cuba, however, the "de facto" chief executive, Prime Minister Fidel Castro, over the past 15 years has systematically destroyed, emasculated, or forced under his control all domestic pressure groups. As a result, his dictatorship is one of the "purest" in a hemisphere long known for its totalitarian governments. Although Castro has wisely recognized that the will of the masses, now that they have been politicized, cannot be totally or perpetually ignored, he has removed the give-and-take from his country's domestic politics and up until recent years indulged in the luxury of government by whim. With the country suffering from an extremely serious housing shortage, for example, Castro spent millions on prize cattle flown in from Canada and housed them and their offspring in expensive "show-case" barns equipped with air conditioning and piped-in music. For years, he frittered away other millions on schemes to subvert

foreign governments, while his own people were subjected to stringent rationing of consumer goods and comestibles. He squandered untold millions more on spur-of-the-moment experimental agricultural projects that provided meager returns in spite of the large investments and the high priority accorded them.

That Castro was able to do this for so long without serious damage to his political position is a tribute to his ability to deflect popular dissatisfaction away from his own stewardship to such scapegoats as militant exile groups, counterrevolutionary "worms," the "microfaction," streetcorner vendors and other remnants of privately-owned businesses, and, of course, that old standby and most dependable of all bugbears--the "imperialist" United States. Those Cubans who might have validly questioned his actions or decisions on technical grounds--or on any grounds, for that matter--for the most part kept their own counsel--and thus their heads--much to the detriment of the national economy. Castro does not take kindly to criticism even when it is constructive and offered with the best of intentions. His disfavor is apparent in the arbitrary treatment of those who have dared to speak up. Major Huber Matos, who had shared the hardships and dangers of guerrilla warfare with Castro in the Sierra Maestra in 1958, was denounced as a coward, traitor, and counterrevolutionary and was given a 30-year prison sentence in 1959 for resigning as military commander of Camaguey Province to protest increasing Communist influence in the government. Former Sugar Industry Minister Orlando Borrego, one of several top government figures who have been relegated to obscurity in the past decade, allegedly owed his demotion in 1969 to his temerity in suggesting, correctly as it turned out, that the 1970 sugar harvest target of ten million tons would not be met. Even the French journalist K. S. Karol and the internationally respected agricultural planner and economist Rene Dumont, despite their admitted pro-Castro bias, were publicly denounced as "agents of the CIA" after they had published painstaking analyses of Castro's economic policies. Punitive reactions like these discouraged constructive criticism at all levels of government.

Safety Valves

To guard against a backlash to the repression of freedom, Castro introduced several safety valves. In September 1965 he promised that anyone who so desired could leave Cuba. This purged from the population, in a much more humane fashion than was employed in the Soviet Union and Communist China, those elements most likely to develop into significant opposition; provided the government with a gratuitous income (all real and personal property of emigres was confiscated); and forced those waiting to depart to conduct themselves in an exemplary manner in order to protect their status as prospective emigres. The refugee exodus, consisting of ten flights a week to Miami with from 70 to 80 passengers on each flight, continued for over six years. Many more Cubans departed than Castro had estimated, but at least he was relieved of many potential trouble makers.

Aware that people are inclined to shoulder greater burdens during times of national stress, Castro worked unceasingly to create an aura of siege, to depict Cuba as a beleaguered bastion fighting desperately to keep one step ahead of the voracious imperialist monster. In speech after speech, year after year, he laid the blame for Cuba's economic problems on the "imperialist blockade," despite the fact that the nations of Western Europe made a shambles of US efforts to restrict their Cuban trade. Many Latin American countries honored the trade restrictions placed on Cuba by the Organization of American States at US urging, but, with the notable exceptions of Argentina and Venezuela, they are trade competitors of Havana. They do not produce what Cuba needs and had no significant trade with Havana even prior to Castro's rule. The so-called "US blockade" unquestionably impaired the Cuban economy years ago when the economic denial program was initiated, but its effectiveness has waned over the years as US technology in Cuba has been replaced by that of the Soviet Union, East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Great Britain, and other countries.

The average Cuban, of course, is either unaware of or unimpressed by any objective assessment of the impact of the "blockade;" he believes only that it is an aggressive policy designed specifically to destroy his economy and his government. It is quite natural that he views the policy as an affront to his country's sovereignty and a threat to him personally. In entertaining such sentiments he is extremely vulnerable to Castro's "beleaguered bastion" thesis and to claims that "imperialism" is responsible for whatever goes wrong in his life.

More dramatic than the blockade are the terrorist raids and bombings carried out by military exile groups against the island itself and against Cuban diplomatic and commercial offices abroad. These attacks, which sometimes result in the killing or maiming of innocent people, contribute absolutely nothing to Castro's demise; on the contrary, they give him further evidence to support his "beleaguered bastion" theme. As is to be expected, these foolhardy ventures are invariably blamed on the US.

When small bands of exiles infiltrate in the naive hope of initiating another guerrilla war, Castro exploits the propaganda potential to the maximum by deliberately mobilizing military reserves far beyond those actually needed to combat the exiles. The reservist is hastily summoned from home, factory, field, or mill to join his unit. Then, amid understandable tension and excitement, he is rushed off to the general area of the incursion. When the operation is over, usually within ten days or two weeks, the reservist, even though he may never have seen a single one of the enemy, has become convinced of the threat of imperialist aggressions. He returns feeling that he has made an important contribution to the defense of his country, that he is needed and important, and no longer a faceless nonentity existing outside the political and social life of the nation. Moreover, the field experience is valuable military training for reservists and keeps the mobilization system itself in good running order.

Although the activation of reserve units--even for short periods--probably reduces local productivity, the benefits to the armed forces more than compensate.

Counterproductive Exile Actions

The primary and immediate beneficiary of the incursions is Castro himself. He is able to divert attention from his economic troubles, to embellish on his "beleaguered bastion" melodrama, and to siphon off potentially dangerous frustrations. Perhaps the most outstanding example of his exploitation of the exiles' antics occurred in April and May 1970, when the politically crucial sugar harvest was entering its final stages embarrassingly short of its goal. When a team of 13 heavily armed exiles was discovered minutes after landing on a beach in eastern Cuba near midnight on April 16, units of the army, reserve militia, Border Guard, and Frontier Brigade were rushed to the northeastern area of Oriente Province and deployed in concentric defense rings around the point of infiltration. By April 26, all the members of the infiltration team had been killed or captured. Blanket press coverage was devoted to the incident, and Fidel himself presided at the memorial service held for five members of the defense forces who had been killed in the fighting.

To secure the release of the captured infiltrators, an action unit of Alpha 66 (an exile organization which has claimed authorship of numerous attacks on Cuban facilities) captured and sank two Cuban fishing boats on May 10 and held the 11 crewmembers hostage in expectation of negotiating an exchange. Reaction in Cuba was carefully orchestrated by the government. On May 15 hostile crowds, which at one time reportedly numbered 200,000, began gathering around the US Embassy building in Havana, then held in caretaker status by the Swiss Embassy. They remained there until May 19, when Castro arrived to host a reception for the returning hostages who had, in the meantime, been abandoned on a small island in the Bahamas by Alpha 66, and had returned to Havana via Nassau.

With the huge building serving as a gigantic, visible, and tangible symbol of US "imperialism," Castro delivered a bombastic address vilifying the US, praising the courage of the fishermen and congratulating the Cuban people on their "great victory" over "imperialism." Almost as an afterthought, he announced that the sugar harvest target, on which he had staked the "honor of the Revolution," would not be met.

The timing of the exile incidents was so beneficial to Castro--allowing him to blunt the keen popular disappointment he knew would follow the public admission that the harvest would not reach the coveted ten million ton mark--that it is difficult to avoid speculating that his intelligence agents, who seem to have penetrated thoroughly all important exile organizations, may have suggested the operations to exile leaders and assisted in the planning and execution. Although there is no evidence to support this "conspiracy" theory, it is clear that Castro deliberately overreacted to shift the focus away from the harvest shortfall. Had the ten million tons been within reach, he would have done nothing that would have jeopardized the harvest.

The infiltration-kidnaping affair served Castro well, but it did not completely negate the impact of the failure to achieve the harvest goal. Overjoyed though they were at the safe return of the fishermen, the Cuban people found the harvest production totals a bitter pill to swallow after their long, almost superhuman efforts in the canefields. Castro was aware of the state of public morale and on July 26, during the traditional speech on the anniversary of the outbreak of his revolution, he hinted in an oblique fashion that he might step down if the people so desired. This probably marked the nadir of his popularity since he came to power in 1959.

Taking Cuba's Pulse

Castro monitors his popularity by his direct contacts with the people and by public opinion polls conducted by an office of the Revolutionary Orientation

Department of the Central Committee of the Cuban Communist Party. Scorning the "representative democracy" of the Western nations with their congresses, house of parliament, etc., Castro claims to be operating a "true democracy" which, in his view, is exemplified by the conversations he conducts with all strata of the Cuban people. He not only frequently visits the University of Havana to engage in spontaneous "bull" sessions with the students, but often chats at great length with kitchen workers at the Habana Libre Hotel or at other places where he might be dining. When he tires of the monotony of the day-to-day business of governing, he visits factories and mills to talk with the workers or he leaves Havana for the rural areas, visiting with people in small towns and state farms. Many a surprised peasant has found himself in his home discussing local problems with Castro over a hospitable cup of coffee.

Castro may need direct contact with the masses for psychological reasons, but in any case, these conversations perform a valuable public relations function. They are the only bridge between the masses and the top level of government. By personal contacts, Castro learns how government proposals will be received, what proposals should be reshaped or shelved and what segments of the population need attention in terms of political education and indoctrination. If he tried to assay public opinion through formal channels, such as the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution (CDRs), he probably would be told not what the masses are thinking, but what the municipal and provincial CDR leaders think he wants to hear.

Guessing Wrong

This system is not infallible, however. When on September 28, 1965 he offered to permit unrestricted emigration to the US, he miscalculated grievously. The thousands upon thousands of Cubans who "voted with their feet" by applying for permission to leave their homeland became such an embarrassment that the government stopped accepting applications on May 31, 1966. By that time so many people had registered to emigrate that the exodus continued for over six years

at a rate of about 4,000 per month. This outpouring of refugees did contain certain benefits for Castro, but it gave the regime a political black eye and more important, led to a "brain drain" that cost Cuba, already weakened by the loss of upwards of half a million upper and middle class citizens in exile, many of the people it needed most: professionals, experienced management personnel, and skilled technicians.

Another miscalculation occurred in November 1965 when the Military Units for Aid to Production (UMAP) was established. UMAP was advertised as a system to send the unemployed to work in the fields under military supervision, but in reality it created a network of forced labor camps populated by common criminals, homosexuals, school dropouts, clergymen, persecuted religious lay leaders, and anyone who happened to be without visible proof of employment when stopped in the street by "recruiters." Life in the camps was difficult enough what with the strenuous physical labor that had to be performed, but the criminals and sex perverts made it that much harder for those unused to a prison-like existence. Those whose religious beliefs forbade the wearing of uniforms had a particularly difficult time. Within six months, UMAP had aroused so much public antipathy that "recruitment" was halted and the system was permitted to die a natural death. By mid-1968, those who had not already been released were transferred to regular military units to finish their three-year military obligation.

Castro had apparently believed that most of the people would be willing to accept some form of compulsory labor service for those laggards who, in spite of a scarcity of labor, steadfastly avoided work. Guido Garcia Inclan, a radio commentator who sometimes acts as a kind of government-sanctioned ombudsman by airing general complaints from the public, denounced in his broadcasts those who dressed like cane-cutters, carried a machete, bragged of fictional exploits in the harvest, but never actually cut a single stalk of cane. The same commentator also complained of long-haired youths in tight-fitting pants who lolled about the streetcorners of Havana at the height of the harvest when their presence in

the canefields was needed. The public was unprepared, however, for the harsh treatment, strict regimentation, unsanitary conditions, and degenerate environment that the UMAP quickly came to represent. The highly unfavorable reaction from the families and friends of the luckless UMAP "recruits" resulted in prompt reforms and, eventually, elimination of the system altogether.

In spite of popular disapproval, there is no question that Castro could have continued the UMAP if he had so desired, but he was not prepared to accept the price of greater repression, particularly in view of the UMAP's minimum effectiveness. Instead, he sought to achieve the same ends by different means. As the UMAP was being phased out in 1968, the youth arm of the Cuban Communist Party was forming an agricultural labor force of some 50,000 young people (UMAP strength probably never exceeded 45,000) called the Centennial Youth Column. This organization also met with some popular resistance because of strong-arm recruiting tactics in its initial stages, but in general the Column was accepted by the people. In fact, it served as a model for similar but smaller groups such as the Youth Column of the Sea, the Textile Youth Column, and the Steel Youth Column and others which were organized to channel young people into those expanding economic sectors in need of labor. In August 1973, the Centennial Youth Column and its adjunct units were merged with the Permanent Infantry Division, military units in which armed forces personnel were used as common laborers in agriculture and industry, to form the Youth Labor Army, a militarized work force of about 100,000 people.

Key Historical Factors

The ease with which Castro has been able to minimize the give and take in domestic politics is in large part a result of Cuban history. The high incidence of violence in Cuba's political affairs, the absence of a strong democratic tradition, the acceptance of corruption as a way of life by those political leaders who preceded Castro, the weakness

of both governmental and non-governmental institutions at the time of Castro's accession to power, and many years of frustrated revolutionary ambitions all contributed to a politico-economic situation that was ripe for exploitation. Castro was merely continuing Cuba's traditional means of seeking political change when he attacked the Moncada barracks in July 1953 and when he took to the Sierra Maestra mountains in eastern Cuba at the head of a guerrilla column in December 1956. His guerrilla force, as well as many others that appeared in eastern Cuba during the first half of this century, was patterned after the roving bands of irregulars that had waged the War of Independence in 1895-98 and that were regarded as heroic symbols of Cuban nationalism. The violence and selective terrorism to which Castro's urban resistance apparatus resorted in 1957-58 drew little popular criticism not only because the kidnapings, bombings, and assassinations were directed against hated individuals and institutions but also because violence per se was considered neither evil nor improper. (The indiscriminate counterterrorism to which the Batista government resorted, however, redounded to Castro's advantage and served to drive a wedge between the government and the people because it was applied against the population as a whole rather than against specific resistance leaders.) In fact, the high incidence of violence that permeated Cuban politics ever since the Ten Years War a century ago has so conditioned the population that its use as a political tool was looked upon not with disfavor but with a degree of hope. After all, it was violence that had gained Cuba its freedom in 1898, violence that had ousted the hated Machado from the presidency in 1933, and violence that had eventually brought about the collapse of the detested Batista dictatorship on January 1, 1959.

Violence an Accepted Way of Life

Much of the Western press severely criticized Castro in early 1959, labeling his widespread use of the execution wall a "bloodbath." But very few Cubans, even those who later turned against Castro

and went into exile, sided with the critics. Such outstanding public figures as Auxiliary Archbishop of Havana Eduardo Boza Masvidal, later expelled by Castro, and Roberto Agramonte, former Orthodox Party presidential candidate whose integrity was acclaimed by US Ambassador Phillip Bonsal, spoke out in defense of the executions. The Cuban people found it difficult to understand why foreign observers, particularly those in the US, failed to muster much enthusiasm for the elimination of what they considered heinous criminals. Likewise, Castro's use of strong-arm methods to purge the University of Havana of "unreliable" professors and teachers created little stir. Some public outcry was heard when teams of young thugs invaded churches and disrupted services in a deliberate program of harassment of religious institutions, but the population in general was unimpressed. These and similar actions were carried out in the name of the Revolution and thus were automatically justified. In these early days, the emotional pitch of the population was so high that it was enough for Castro to accuse some group of opposition to his policies to bring out howling mobs bent on violence in his defense.

Even in more recent times, after it was no longer a necessary tool for the consolidation of his power, Castro has used violence or the threat of violence as a basic political weapon. In 1968, for example, he had all the means to take over peacefully shops, stores, and other remnants of private enterprise that still existed. He chose, instead, to unleash the "Revolutionary Offensive." Not only were 58,000 small businesses confiscated, but those people who were becoming disillusioned with the regime's inability to satisfy basic needs were thoroughly intimidated. Later the same year, he claimed that "counterrevolutionaries" were conducting a campaign of "economic sabotage" to undermine the government, and, to the prolonged applause of his audience, he warned:

> ...Revolutionary laws are severe. But if they are not severe enough yet, the Revolution can enact still more severe ones. Let them

> (the counterrevolutionaries) not say later that they had not been forewarned nor that they did not know, because if we know anything, this revolution is a hard struggle, a death struggle against the powerful imperialist enemy which encourages and will always encourage these acts (of sabotage). This is a struggle to the death. The people in their wisdom and instinct realize this. This is a struggle for survival of the Revolution or the counterrevolution, and when things stack up thusly, halfway terms are ruled out and the measures must be extreme... Before this revolution can cease to exist, no head of a single revolutionary will remain on his shoulders in this country. Before they can destroy this revolution, the heads of all who may want to destroy it will roll.

As if to emphasize Castro's threat, shortly after his speech a "saboteur" who allegedly had burned down a clothing warehouse was executed.

In May 1970, at the time of the incident of the kidnaped fishermen, two members of the Swiss diplomatic mission were physically restrained by a mob of demonstrators organized by the government from leaving the former US Embassy building and were without food for three and a half days. A year later the Cuban intellectual community was shocked by what came to be known as the Padilla affair. The well known poet Herberto Padilla, who had incurred the enmity of old guard Communists as early as 1961, had permitted some veiled criticism of the Revolution to infiltrate his works, a lapse for which he had already been called to account twice. Padilla and his wife, Belkis Cuza Male, were taken into custody by officials of the Interior Ministry on March 20, 1971. His wife was released after a few days of questioning, but Padilla was kept incommunicado for over five weeks. During his detention he signed a 4,000 word "confession" admitting to involvement in counter-revolutionary activities. He was released some three weeks after the date of his "confession," and a day later, in front of his

colleagues assembled at the Union of Writers and Artists in Havana, he delivered a lengthy and debasing self-criticism. Following his lead, several others, including his wife, abjectly admitted counter-revolutionary shortcomings of their own. Although Padilla denied that his "confession" was the result of torture, the manner in which his case was handled arouses strong suspicion.

Less fortunate than Padilla was a French press photographer, Pierre Golondorf, who allegedly was caught trying to smuggle a manuscript of Padilla's to a publisher in Spain. Golondorf received a long prison sentence after being held incommunicado several months, and authorities in Havana let it be known that "other intellectuals could be arrested on charges of counterrevolutionary activities." The message was not lost on Cuba's intellectuals. Unfavorable domestic reaction, as far as can be determined, was nil, although a fierce battle of words raged between Castro and European and Latin American intellectuals.

Democracy a Stranger

Violence was a traditional phenomenon in Cuba; practical democracy was not. Except for Panama, Cuba was the last of the Latin American republics to gain its freedom; at the time of Batista's overthrow in 1959 it had been independent from Spain for barely 60 years. In that relatively brief period, violence and corruption became stronger institutions than did democratic ideals. The first years of independence from Spain, 1898 to 1902, were spent under US occupation which, according to Secretary of War Elihu Root, "should not be, and of course will not be, continued any longer than is necessary to enable the people to establish a suitable government to which control shall be transferred, a government which shall really represent the people of Cuba, maintain order, and comply with international obligations." General John R. Brooks (January 1, 1899 - December 20, 1899) and General Leonard Wood (December 20, 1899-May 20, 1902) were appointed by the President of the US as Cuba's first and second governors.

In the general elections held on December 31, 1901 under General Wood's supervision, Cuban democracy started off on the wrong foot and never fully recovered. General Bartolome Maso, piqued because the board supervising the elections included none of his representatives, withdrew from the race in its final stages and the Moderate Party's Tomas Estrada Palma won unopposed. There was no improvement in the offing. The first election in a free Cuba, held in February 1904 to select members of Congress, became a farce when the Liberal Party refused to concede the Republican Party's victory. By boycotting the opening session of Congress in April, it denied a quorum to the legislature, thus preventing the Congress from convening.

The next presidential election, on December 1, 1905, was a repetition of the first. Tomas Estrada Palma again won without opposition; this time the Liberal Party decided to withdraw after one of its popular leaders was murdered during a brawl with the Santa Clara chief of police. As it turned out, its abstention made no difference. The Moderate Party had contrived to win in any eventuality by perpetrating gross fraud in voter registrations. It is not really surprising that the Liberals turned to violence to redress the wrongs they had suffered. Their armed uprising brought back the US marines in October 1906, and President Theodore Roosevelt named Charles E. Magoon provisional governor of Cuba.

Under Magoon, reasonably honest elections were held, and General Jose Miguel Gomez of the Liberal Party was the victor. In 1912, however, Gomez's own party spurned him and tapped Vice President Alfredo Zayas as its presidential candidate. Gomez and his followers, who controlled the ballot boxes in Havana and Oriente (the two provinces with the greatest population), proceeded to throw the election to General Mario Garcia Menocal of the Conservative Party. Four years later, Menocal sought to reverse the election results by declaring himself re-elected in spite of a disclaimer--supported later by the Supreme Court--from the Central Election Board. Again the cheated Liberals took up arms, and again the US sent marines to the scene.

Amid the usual violence and fraud, Alfredo Zayas was elected on November 1, 1920 to succeed Menocal, his former opponent but now his mentor. Although still another US intervention brought about the invalidation of the results in 20 percent of the electoral districts and led to supplemental elections in March 1921, further sporadic violence caused the Liberals to avoid the polls and Zayas officially gained the presidency.

In 1924, Zayas, the former Liberal now turned Conservative, found it opportune to change his party once more. In return for the promise of lucrative spoils, he gave his support--mostly armed muscle at the polling places--to the Liberal Party candidate Gerardo Machado. Machado won handily and, when his four-year term was drawing to a close, he contrived through blatantly illegal means to gain a second term of six years. This was too much even for Cubans to bear. Resistance developed, and finally, in August 1933, Machado resigned and flew to Nassau, allegedly taking with him seven bags of gold.

In the extended period of chaos that followed Machado's departure, the presidency was filled in rapid succession by General Alberto Herrera, Carlos Manuel de Cespedes, a pentarchy, Dr. Ramon Grau San Martin, Carlos Hevia, Manuel Marques Sterling, Colonel Carlos Mendieta, Jose Antonio Barnet, Miguel Mariano Gomez, and Federico Laredo Bru. Some were president for a day; some did not even have time to take the oath of office before they were overtaken by events. The only man to gain the presidency through elections, Miguel Mariano Gomez, was impeached and ousted after barely seven months in office for vetoing a bill that was designed to enrich Fulgencio Batista.

Batista, a former army sergeant, had succeeded in seizing control of the army in 1933, and as army chief of staff quickly emerged as the most powerful man in Cuban politics. He made presidents and, as in the case of Miguel Mariano Gomez, he broke them. He finally decided to come out from behind the scenes and rule in public. He ran for president in 1940 and, in what was probably one of the cleanest elections

in Cuban history, won. When his candidate was defeated by Dr. Ramon Grau San Martin in the election --once against honest--in 1944, he turned the government over to his successor peacefully. Grau stepped down in 1948 for his own hand-picked candidate, Dr. Carlos Prio Socarras. When it became clear, however, that Dr. Roberto Agramonte of the Orthodox Party (a splinter from Grau's and Prio's Autentico Party) would win in 1952, Batista staged a coup d' etat, ruling first as prime minister and then as president until he was able to hold a controlled election that would give him the appearance of legitimacy. To run legally in the race, he yielded the presidency to his minister of state, Dr. Andres Domingo. His only opponent, Dr. Grau, withdrew a few days before the votes were cast, and the way was clear for Batista to rule for another four years. The elections of 1958 were as much a farce as those in 1954, with Batista's candidate, Dr. Andres Rivero Aguero, claiming 62 percent of the ballots. Castro's revolt prevented Rivero from ever taking office.

Corruption a Friend

Widespread corruption, as well as the unsavory methods employed in elections during Cuba's republican era, tarnished the democratic ideals that were, in theory at least, supposed to be the guiding lines of the country's political life. Historian Hubert Herring described the first president, Tomas Estrada Palma, as "incorruptible and devoted," but his successors were a different matter. Of the second president, Herring wrote: "With a smile, Gomez emptied the treasury and allowed Cuban and American cronies to fatten on concessions." President Mario Garcia Menocal "succumbed to the infection of easy money for himself and his friends," and the next (Alfredo Zayas) "president's rule by plunder offered no hope for the citizens." Then came Machado who "rewarded his inner circle with handsome incomes from concessions and contracts." Batista "grew rich from commissions on contracts, kickbacks on customs, and percentages of the National Lottery. When he retired in favor of Grau in 1944 and went to live in Florida, he was

able to settle a fortune upon his divorced wife. Cautious observers said that he had other millions invested in Florida apartment houses and like ventures." Dr. Ramon Grau San Martin "could not control the grafters who surrounded him... There was a steady deterioration in public services and increased corruption in high places and in low." Things were to get even worse. Under Grau's successor, Dr. Carlos Prio Socarras, "thievery reached new heights, and the President himself was able to build a remarkable house in nearby La Chata at a cost of some two or three million dollars--on his salary of $25,000."

Thus, when Castro took over in 1959 and ignored his pledge of free elections within a year, there was no strong outcry (other than from the exile community) from a population long denied the right to choose its own leaders. The democratic tradition was far too weak to withstand the pressure of caudillismo that Castro represented.

Revolutionary Aspirations Denied

Another historical factor also helped pave the way for the people's acceptance of Castro as their 20th century Moses. Cuban revolutionary aspirations had been frustrated for many years. Even when victory seemed tantalizingly close, revolutionary aims were thwarted. The tragic and inhuman Ten Years War (1868-78), for example, ended on a hopeful note with the signing of the Pact of Zanjon. This treaty, which had been purchased at great cost in blood and human misery, appeared to grant important concessions to the rebellious island. The pact, however, was honored only partially, temporarily, and half-heartedly by Spain, and before long Cubans again took up arms in search of freedom.

Then, during the War of Independence (1895-98), the United States intervened just when--according to contemporary and present day Cuban historians--the revolutionaries had Spain "on the ropes." Whether this nationalistic interpretation is true is academic; the important point is that many politically conscious Cubans believed it and believed

that the Cuban people were thus denied the fruits of victory after 30 long years of bitter struggle. This group looked upon the US intervention as a mere change of tutelage, with the US replacing Spain as master of Cuba's fate.

Life in the republican era seemed to bring the country no closer to the achievement of revolutionary goals. US influence, embodied in steadily increasing economic involvement, frequent military interventions, and the hated Platt Amendment, pervaded all important aspects of national life until the mid-30s and made a mockery of the nation's alleged independence. At the same time, the so-called democratic institutions pressed upon Cuba by a paternalistic US functioned in such a manner as to perpetuate corruption and political intrigue and to confound any effort by the masses to improve their lot.

A ray of hope gleamed briefly following the fall of Gerardo Machado, but it was quickly extinguished when the US, fearful of the "red menace" and appalled by the continuing chaos, refused to recognize the revolutionary government of Ramon Grau San Martin. (His power base was relatively narrow and he did not enjoy support across the political spectrum or throughout the country at large.) Washington waited for the emergence of a leader (Fulgencio Batista) who could restore order before granting the recognition so vital to any Cuban government wishing to remain in power.

While Batista charted a course in close conjunction with US interests over the next ten years, Grau retained leadership of the revolutionary elements and organized his followers into the Cuban Revolutionary (Autentico) Party, which succeeded in gaining wide appeal among the masses. Grau had to wait until 1944 before gaining the presidency, however, and by then the seeds of corruption had taken firm root in his political organization. Opportunism replaced whatever revolutionary ideals remained from the previous decade. Although Grau's hand-picked successor, Carlos Prio Socarras, won the presidency in the elections in 1948, the Autenticos

had to face the electorate without the support of many party members who, disillusioned by the unbridled graft and other forms of corruption that permeated all levels of government, had broken away in 1947 to form a splinter group called the Cuban People's (Ortodoxo) Party. This party, to which Fidel Castro and many of his followers belonged, became the repository of revolutionary ideals and "the refuge of yet another rootless younger generation."

Batista reappeared in 1952 to thwart the nation's revolutionary ambitions once again by conducting a coup just prior to the elections that would have vaulted the Ortodoxos into power. With peaceful means denied them, the revolutionaries looked to the rifle as their only salvation. Many unsuccessful attempts were made to depose Batista; the Moncada barracks assault in July 1953, Colonel Ramon Barquin's military conspiracy in April 1956, the Goicuria barracks assault later in the same month, the attack on the Presidential Palace in March 1957, and the Cienfuegos naval conspiracy in September 1957 were the most important. Victory came to the man who captured the imagination of the people by literally retracing the steps of such national heroes as Jose Marti, General Maximo Gomez, and General Antonio Maceo. Whereas most revolutionary efforts to overthrow Batista were short-lived coup attempts, Castro's guerrilla campaign was long and drawn out (December 1956 to January 1959). This gave him the time to develop an image the public could accept, support, and cherish, and Batista did much to make Castro's task an easy one.

On January 1, 1959 most Cubans viewed Castro as the best opportunity since at least the mid-30s to achieve the political, social, and economic goals they had fruitlessly sought for so long. His revolution had ended its military phase and was about to enter its social phase, with promises of a clean break with the past and an honest government subject to the will of the people. He and his insurgent band seemed almost a reincarnation of the legendary heroes of the War of Independence, and his guerrilla campaign against Batista was similar in many ways to the irregular war which the revolutionaries of the most dramatic period

in Cuban history waged against Spain. It was almost as if the nation were reliving the glorious moment of its independence, and it was Castro who was responsible for the miraculous rebirth. Such was the euphoria of the people that they gave Castro a free hand to reshape the country's institutions as he saw fit. The Cuban people, except for those with vested interests, were ready to try anything new so long as this new-found messiah led the way. They did not have long to wait.

CHAPTER TWO: OLD INSTITUTIONS SCORNED

Weaknesses Exploited

When Castro and his victorious guerrillas entered Havana in January 1959, the country's fundamental institutions were already seriously weakened. It is impossible to determine just when in his drive to unseat Batista Castro convinced himself that the whole structure of Cuban society would have to be demolished and rebuilt from the ground up. It seems most likely, however, that the decision was a gradual one, based on a series of reactions to specific problems that confronted the revolutionaries over a long period of time.

Castro's "No Election Decree" of October 10, 1958, for example, was a response to Batista's announcement that national elections would be held on November 3 of the same year. The rebels had to take a public stand before elections were held if they were to avoid the possibility that the Revolution might find itself opposing a new government that to all appearances had been honestly chosen and that was at least nominally free from the illegality, corruption, and brutual repression that had characterized the Batista administration since 1952. Although some candidates abstained or withdrew, many were obliged--by pressure or connection--to participate in the race. Thus, because the rebels' decree barred from public office for 30 years anyone taking part in the elections, many politicians and their parties were effectively excluded from post-revolution political activity.

Another example was the elimination--despite earlier disclaimers of any such action--of foreign-owned (and ultimately all) private enterprise in Cuba. Batista's hurried departure early on New Year's Day 1959 left Fidel without a windmill to fight. He needed a threat so that he could defend the Cuban people, a threat that would unite the masses behind him while he introduced the radical measures necessary to consolidate his position. The

enmity of the US, with its distasteful reputation of naked intervention in Latin American politics, would serve this purpose and would--based on previous Cuban experience--be relatively easy to provoke, the US being the largest investor in Cuba. Castro set out on a course of deliberate provocation, forcing a series of reactions from the US, which he countered by confiscating and expropriating American property, thus driving ever deeper the wedge between the two countries. Although Cuba unquestionably paid the greater price economically, the cost was calculated to be bearable in view of the political gains. The casualty in this process of planned alienation was private enterprise. Private business had provided much of the money that had financed Castro's guerrilla war, but Castro realized that it could now contribute in the same manner to his overthrow. He was, therefore, quite willing to do away with the private sector despite the serious economic problems that could inevitably result.

The Legislature

Other institutions, rather than being systematically destroyed, collapsed of their own weight. The legislature, dissolved permanently shortly after the rebels entered the capital, had rarely in its 57-year history served as an effective counterbalance to the executive branch of government. The only time the Congress successfully challenged the presidency was in 1936 when, at the direction of the army chief of staff, Fulgencio Batista (at the time Cuba's de facto chief executive), President Miguel Mariano Gomez was impeached for refusing to sign into law a bill legalizing graft for Batista.

Corruption had been a trademark of the legislature ever since it was formed in 1902. According to Hugh Thomas, Cuba's first Congress:

> "...embarked upon democracy with a scandal fit to discredit it. Having first passed a bill giving lavish salaries to public office holders, another was introduced to give extra payments

> to the army of liberation: one dollar was promised to privates for each day of service, and lavish sums to officers. This opened the way to a sensational speculation on the part of a number of politicians, who let it be understood that the delays in settling this question would be endless, and persuaded half the soldiers with claims to sell these at half their proper price. Afterwards, when the bill had been in the event quickly passed, the new politicians...drew in the profit without shame."

Involvement of high-ranking Congressmen such as Orestes Ferrara, president of the House of Representatives, in the multi-million dollar scandals of the Gomez administration (1909-1913) further tarnished the reputation of the Congress. During the Gomez administration the national lottery (outlawed in 1898) was restored, providing a source of wealth that continued to corrupt the legislature up until the time of Batista's fall in 1959. The president of the Senate in 1909, who 18 years earlier had found it politically expedient to denounce the system of betting as "social gangrene," offered a bill to reinstitute the lottery and met with no opposition. The law provided that the lottery tickets would be sold by widows and families of veterans of the War of Independence and that these people could retain a percentage of the face value of the tickets. In practice, however, the lucrative ticket distributorships were apportioned among congressmen and political cronies, who proceeded to multiply their take simply by increasing the sale price of the tickets to as much as five times their face value. Thomas claims that "within a few years of Gomez' law, the lottery was known to be the most efficient method of illegal enrichment, and above all for buying the silence or support of the legislature or press."

Over the years, the legislature either permitted itself to be corrupted into supporting the president or, at the least sign of recalcitrance, was suspended. The period of Batista's second administration (1952-1959) is typical. Following his coup d'etat on March 10, 1952, Batista ruled without a legislature until

January 1955, when, after a carefully controlled election in which he ran unchallenged, he was assured a docile and compliant Congress. Although members of the opposition in the House and Senate--some presumably driven by self-interest and others by the hope that by working within the system (albeit a corrupt one) they could act as a kind of legislative conscience and possibly influence favorably some of the legislation brought up for discussion--their presence served only to give the appearance of legality to a body that functioned as a rubber stamp for the presidency.

During the 34 months in which the Congress under Batista was suspended, legislative powers were invested in the Council of Ministers. This is the system in use today under Castro. Acting through President Manuel Urrutia Lleo (January 1 - July 17, 1959), Castro dissolved Batista's legislature in Janaury 1959 and a month later promulgated the Fundamental Law which, in Article 119, granted all legislative powers to the Council of Ministers. In this fashion, Cuba's Congress was permanently laid to rest even before Castro became prime minister. Its passing went unnoticed and unregretted by the masses it was supposed to represent.

The Military

Following his accession to power, Castro handled Batista's military establishment in much the same manner as he had handled the legislature; he simply liquidated it. Its duties were transferred to the Rebel Army. Some of the officers and men who had served honorably and who were willing to submit to the discipline were incorporated (as individuals rather than as whole units) into the Rebel Army, but most were released outright. The military had had all the men and equipment necessary to destroy Castro's guerrillas in combat during the war in the Sierra Maestra, but it was devoid of fighting spirit and lacked a sense of purpose. Riddled with corruption and burdened with a venal hierarchy incapable of effective leadership, it collapsed as much from its own internal decay as from military pressures in the field.

Rear-echelon officers sold guns and ammunition to the rebels' intermediaries, front-line commanders, unable to nail down their elusive adversaries, rounded up groups of local peasants, slaughtered them, and reported the bodies to headquarters as "rebel casualties." The treatment frequently accorded captured rebels was enough to alienate any decent military man, and the indiscriminate bombing of peasant villages in the Sierra Maestra so sickened air force pilots and bomber crews that they sometimes jettisoned their ordnance out over the ocean. A few were so appalled by the bestiality that they deserted and went into exile. Field commanders came to realize that if the fortunes of combat turned against them, they could not count on reinforcements. Still worse, it was not unusual for units to be ordered into combat without being forewarned of ambushes that the General Staff knew had been set up by the rebels. Under these conditions, it is no wonder that over 400 army soldiers had surrendered to the rebels by mid-1957 and that many more had deserted to join the rebel ranks.

This is not to imply that the rebels inflicted no defeats on Batista's forces. The guerrillas won far more encounters than they lost, and their skill in overcoming platoon and company-sized units in isolated outposts in Oriente Province finally compelled the army to evacuate these positions and withdraw its troops to larger garrisons in the cities. Although many of the battles--particularly those in 1957 and the first half of 1958--involved fewer than a hundred men on either side, the guerrillas' ability to come out consistently on top helped keep rebel morale as high as army morale was low.

The seeds of the disease that brought about the collapse of the Cuban military establishment had been sown many years before Fidel Castro ever became interested in politics. The foundation for the army was laid in 1907 during the second US military intervention (the Army of Liberation having been disbanded in 1899 during the first intervention). Although the army had dabbled in politics from time to time in its early years, it had not played a major role until the early 1930s.

It was President Machado who politicized the army. He promoted to choice positions those officers open to corruption and assigned to various military limboes those whose integrity interfered with his ambitions. To sap the influence of the younger and less tractable officers, he saw to it that they were overruled whenever they attempted to censure enlisted men for breaches of discipline. This latter action backfired. During the hectic summer of 1933, these officers, shocked by the chaos that the general strike and widespread terrorism had brought, forced Machado to leave the country. In the turmoil following his departure, however, army enlisted men, led by Sergeant Fulgencio Batista and other non-commissioned officers, mutinied throughout the entire country and seized power. About 300 of the young professional officers took over the National Hotel in Havana, apparently hoping that a show of unity and possible US backing could restore their control over the army. Their failure to act decisively, however, doomed their efforts almost from the start. After more than three weeks of tense waiting, the soldiers attacked the hotel with everything from rifles to naval and field artillery. Following a furious battle, the surviving officers were sent off to jail. Thus, the Cuban officer corps lost most of its dedicated and well-trained professionals; their places were taken by corporals and sergeants quickly elevated to lieutenants, captains, majors, and colonels.

The new armed forces dominated Cuban domestic politics from 1933 until late 1944, when newly elected President Grau began an extensive shake-up that was to rid the military of most of the officers who supported Batista. But again the tide was reversed. Batista staged a successful coup on March 10, 1952, immediately purged those officers not personally devoted to him, and restored his old cronies to top-level positions. By these actions, he removed the very individuals who might have destroyed Castro's guerrillas and replaced them with incompetents more interested in amassing great fortunes than in fighting rebels. In effect, Batista underwrote his own downfall.

Political Parties

Just as discredited as the military in the eyes of the Cuban people were the political parties. None had evolved as a consistently strong contender in national or local elections, and none had developed a clear ideology of its own. Conservatives of one day would run on the ticket of the Liberals the following day. Democrats were not always democrats, and the Cuban Revolutionary Party did not represent the revolutionary ideals that gave the party its name. After Eddy Chibas' suicide in August 1951, even the Ortodoxo Party split wide open. Without Chibas' demagogic voice and impetuous leadership, the Ortodoxos broke up into factions, some favoring the radical path that Castro chose and others seeking a more conventional, less militant means of solving Cuba's problems.

Opportunism was the trademark of Cuban politics. Batista was just as willing to work with the Communists as to work against them; and the Communists, in turn, could do a quick about-face when they realized that Castro's rebel forces were gaining the upper hand in the fight against Batista. Parties were not tied rigidly to a narrow ideology, and therefore new parties could be created and old ones discarded without damage to the politicians or the political system. It was a candidate's personal charm and rhetorical skill, not the party he represented, that were important factors in an election. The people attached their loyalties at the ballot box to the individuals of their choice rather than to a particular party. In the elections in 1944, for example, Grau won the presidency in a landslide but his party was unable to gain a majority in either the House or the Senate.

Cuba's political parties proved useful for half a century, but were never vital. In 1959, Castro did not have to destroy them; they quietly disintegrated from lack of interest.

The Judiciary

The judiciary suffered a somewhat different fate. After initial purges removed persons who might prove independent or otherwise embarrassing to Castro's Revolutionary Government, the judiciary was largely ignored. This was possible because a system of courts was instituted to handle actions that under the new revolutionary ethics were considered to be crimes. The "old" judiciary inherited from Batista was quite unused to neglect. Previous administrations had treated the judiciary in cavalier fashion, accepting those juridical decisions that were convenient and bypassing or disregarding altogether those that were disliked. In addition, judges were frequently bribed, and in many cases they owed their appointments to political rather than juridical skill. These factors, plus the fact that in the more remote areas justice was dispensed from the mouth of a pistol by a member of the Rural Guard, did little to foster a tradition of respect for the courts. Justice was often looked upon as a luxury that only the rich could afford.

Some improvements in the judicial system were made after the Constitution of 1940 was adopted, but, as in the case of the legislature, the judiciary never evolved to the point that it could represent a serious challenge to the presidency. Law was still considered a tool of convenience, a weapon to be employed only when one's opponent broke it and not a code of conduct for one's self. Even in the period from 1940 to 1952, when Cuba made its closest approach to democracy, contempt for the courts was evident in the highest places. Thus, in 1952 President Prio, apparently in exchange for several valuable tracts of land outside Havana, granted a full pardon to a wealthy Cuban who seven years earlier had been tried and convicted of child molestation, but who, because of numerous appeals, had never served any portion of his six-year prison sentence.

The fortunes of the judiciary fell to new laws after Batista's ouster of Prio. Although the Court of Constitutional Guarantees--presumably in a sage

spirit of self-preservation--ruled that Batista's government was not unconstitutional because "revolution is the source of the law," many honest magistrates found themselves torn between their duty to uphold the law and the increasing lawlessness of the government they represented. Havana Criminal Court Judge Jose Francisco Alabau Trelles, appointed as magistrate and special judge to investigate six murders and several other crimes, felt such pangs of conscience that he decided he had to act. On March 11, 1958, he indicted Lieutenant Colonel Esteban Ventura, chief of the police department's Division of Subversive Activities, and Lieutenant Julio Laurent, chief of Naval Intelligence--both notorious killers --for two of the murders and ordered them held without bail. Within 24 hours, President Batista had outmaneuvered Alabau by suspending civil rights and removing the indictments from civilian courts to military tribunals, where they were immediately quashed. The enraged Ventura, accompanied by two police sergeants, went with gun drawn to the courthouse in an effort to find and kill Judge Alabau. The judge had fortunately gone into hiding and later made his way safely into exile.

Thirteen other judges--two of them presidents of divisions of the Havana Court of Appeals--took a more cautious approach. On March 6, just a week before Alabau's indictments, they addressed an appeal for relief to the Chamber of Administration of the Havana Court of Appeals, stating:

> The administration of justice in Cuba has never been so mocked, ridiculed, and abused as it has been recently. Upon reviewing our hazardous past history, we cannot find any record of two sons of a judge having been killed by a soldier, or the homes of two magistrates having been bombed, or of a magistrate acting as an electoral inspector having been arrested by a member of the armed forces, and his having been kept incommunicado and deprived of food. Nor can we find any record of judicial procedure having been prevented by national police patrol

cars, or the traditional institution of habeas corpus mocked and ignored after the criminal division of the Supreme Court ordered prisoners to be freed, prisoners who were later found shot to death, or after the Court of Appeals of this district had ordered that they be presented before the court under the appeals procedure.

On the other hand, it is notorious that vices like gambling and prostitution are exploited by those called upon to prosecute them and that the list of deaths and murders among prisoners grows daily, even including young people and women, without the authors of such crimes being discovered, owing to the lack of police cooperation.

There hardly remains any Court of Appeals where, for lack of proper vigilance, a fire has not broken out or a bomb has not exploded. A few steps from the Supreme Court building a man has been found shot to death, and the police have neither been able to prevent it nor to trace the assassins.

A judge, appointed as special prosecutor to investigate the facts, is publicly subjected to threats and insults with complete impunity.

Finally, in the municipalities of Santiago de Cuba, Guantanamo, Palma Soriano, Bayamo, El Cobre, Manzanillo, and Niquero, it is a notorious fact that cases of violent death (by gunshot, torture, and hanging) are daily events, while the judges are prevented by officers of the armed forces from doing their duty and are deprived of the indispensable means to do it.

This state of affairs makes the judiciary of the Republic appear as a weak and oppressed body in the eyes of the nation...

As could only be expected, nothing came of the judges' appeal, and the situation they described so accurately continued without change for another nine and a half months.

If the judges themselves were so distressed as to acknowledge publicly that their inability to function was due to government lawlessness, it is hardly surprising that the people whom the courts were supposed to serve found no solace or refuge in their judicial system. The judges' description of the situation existing during most of Batista's second administration goes far toward explaining why the people were so willing to accept the revolutionary tribunals, established by Castro in early 1959 to handle major crimes, and the people's courts, set up in later years for minor offenses. The new courts, despite their many shortcomings, did much in the early stages of the Revolution to assuage the people's thirst for justice that the old system had failed to quench.

Much of the old judicial system remained in existence until 1973 but was rarely used. The revolutionary tribunals and the people's courts handled the great volume of juridical business. This dual system of courts was replaced in 1973 by a new judicial structure patterned on the court systems of the countries of East Europe, and the laws by which it operates are based on "socialist legality," rather than the Napoleonic code which heretofore had been the foundation of Cuba's legal procedures.

The Church

The judiciary could be bypassed by creating a new court system, but to subjugate Cuba's major religious institution, the Roman Catholic Church, required different tactics. Castro had one big advantage. Ever since the country's independence, the influence of the Church in Cuba had been only moderate. In the colonial period, relations between the Church and the mother country, Spain, were very close. Not only was all of the Church hierarchy Spanish, but favored Spain when the revolutionaries were struggling for Cuban independence. There were notable exceptions to the pro-Spanish sentiments among most of the clergy, of course, but they were viewed as just that--exceptions.

Although most Cubans were nominal Catholics, they identified the Church--both during and after the rebellion--with colonialism. Thus, when Spain was forced to withdraw in 1899, the Church not only lost much of the property that it had acquired but also experienced considerable difficulty in recruiting native clergy. The result was a relatively weak religious institution that remained under a cloud of suspicion and suffered from a chronic shortage of priests, especially in the rural areas.

The Church tried to establish itself as a positive social force, particularly after the 1930s, but it was unable to recover what influence and prestige it had enjoyed before Cuba's independence. In addition, the conservative bent of its largely Spanish (and pro-Franco) clergy acted as a restraint against those in the religious life who pressed for a more liberal posture. Far from taking the lead in the fight for social justice, the Church was frequently on the defensive in the '40s and '50s, fending off attempts by the Popular Socialist (Communist) Party to pass laws that would have emasculated the parochial school system and explaining politically embarrassing incidents, such as the friendly welcome accorded Fulgencio Batista by Archbishop of Havana Cardinal Arteaga in 1952 following Batista's successful coup d'etat.

The Church's inability to compete with the radical elements in answering the critical need of the masses for leadership championing their cause eventually resulted once again in the identification of the Church with the status quo. Despite the willingness of priests like Father Guillermo Sardinas to join Castro's guerrilla band in the Sierra Maestra, the Church's denunciation of government atrocities, and its attempts to settle the nation's political problems through negotiation, the notion that the hierarchy was insensitive to the plight of the masses prevailed. The very fact that the Church was singularly ineffective in its attempts to change the status quo and was unsuccessful in its confrontations with the government served to discredit it as an institution too weak to benefit the oppressed.

The activist priests provided Castro with a convenient political tool which he submitted as "proof" that the rebels were not the radicals they were rumored to be, but there is no evidence that any of the clergymen, Father Sardinas included, exerted significant influence over him or over other members of the rebel leadership. Castro was willing to use them as long as they were willing to be used. They functioned primarily as chaplains, as confessors to people executed by the rebels, and as dispensers of the sacraments to peasants living in areas "liberated" by the Rebel Army. The few priests who cheerfully suffered the rigors of guerrilla life could not, however, counter the popular belief that the Church, dominated as it was by Spanish clergy, was allied with the upper class, which was also made up largely of families with strong personal and political ties to Spain, and even that it was an agent of foreign interests. Also damaging to the Church's position was the permanent departure from Cuba, in gradually increasing numbers, of hordes of its most faithful financial supporters, once the radical nature of the Castro regime became apparent. The Roman Catholic Church, without substantial economic resources, widespread popular support, or influence among rebel leaders, could do little to change the course of events once Castro had assumed power.

For the Church, the post-Batista period opened auspiciously enough. Archbishop of Santiago Enrique Perez Serantes was one of those who entered Havana with Fidel on January 8, 1959. He had presumably earned this honor in 1957 when, in several pastoral letters, he denounced the crimes of the government and pleaded for peace. The summary executions of former government officials drew criticism from abroad, but representatives of the Church defended the new administration's right to eliminate those guilty of heinous crimes. Perez Serantes, however, in an action reminiscent of his plea in 1953 for the lives of those who had attacked Moncada, asked Castro to reduce the sanctions as much as possible "because the new tree of liberty and justice does not need to be watered with more blood."

The close relationship between the Church and the regime was short-lived. The Church's power was gradually reduced until finally it disappeared entirely. Initial friction appeared in late January 1959 when all academic credits and degrees awarded by Catholic and other private advanced educational institutions after November 30, 1956 were declared null and void. Although this measure seems to have been intended primarily as a sop to students at the Universities of Havana and Santiago (which had been closed since November 30, 1956 by government order), and not as an opening salvo against the Church, top Church officials requested clarification of the status of private education in mid-February. Perez Serantes, perhaps because he knew the Revolution's leaders better than others in the Church hierarchy, was particularly worried. He asked: "Could it be said that to be a student of a Catholic school is a danger for society? Perhaps there is fear that our youth, for having passed through a Catholic school, will be less cultured or less manly? Let Dr. Fidel Castro, alumnus of Dolores (a Jesuit high school in Santiago attended briefly by Fidel) and of Belen (a Jesuit high school in Havana which Fidel attended from 1942 to 1945), answer for us."

Perez Serantes was more skeptical than his fellow prelates about the impact of the radical Agrarian Reform Law which Castro promulgated in May 1959. Some of the clergy welcomed the law as an important and necessary facet of social justice, but, after originally endorsing the measure, Perez Serantes reversed himself and warned of increasing Communist influence at the highest levels of the government. As the Revolution ground on, destroying the free press, private enterprise, independent labor unions, and any other potential threat to unfettered executive power, the rest of the Church hierarchy joined Perez Serantes in opposing the regime.

The increasing contacts of the new government with the Soviet Union confirmed the clergy's fears. A pastoral letter from Perez Serantes in May 1960 warned that "the enemy is within the gates;" three months later, the episcopate released a pastoral condemning "the growing advances of Communism in our country" and

declaring that the Cuban people "could only be led to a Communist regime by deception." Castro responded on August 11, 1960. He accused the Church of "systematic provocations" and charged that as a result of prodding from the US Embassy and Franco's Spain, the Church had mobilized "as many Fascist priests as can be found to fight against the Revolution."

The final stages of the Church-State conflict had arrived. Church services were disrupted by government-organized mobs of young toughs, Church property was confiscated under various pretexts, religious processions were broken up and finally banned altogether, priests found it impossible to obtain supplies with which to repair their churches and other buildings, Church-sponsored programs on radio and television were silenced, and the government-controlled press conducted a campaign of slander and denigration of the clergy which could not be refuted for want of a vehicle though which to reply. Following a speech in which Castro threatened the Catholic school system, the Church fired one last barrage before falling silent. In an open letter directed to Castro, on December 4, 1960, Church leaders vigorously protested the constant harassment to which it had been subjected by the regime. Castro replied by making another speech in which he bitterly denounced the Church and linked it once again to the enemies of the Revolution.

The Bay of Pigs invasion in April 1961 provided the setting for the rounding up of some 300 members of the clergy (mostly non-Cuban priests) who, along with many thousands of suspected or potential "counter-revolutionaries," were then herded into Havana's baseball stadium, the moat at Cabana fortress, and other make-shift prisons by Castro's security forces. When the priests were eventually released, their residency permits were revoked by the government and many left the island. In June, the Church's schools were nationalized, "eliminating the discrimination and privileges that fostered the division of social classes and clashed with the cardinal principles of socialism." In August, two priests and the nephew of a bishop were sentenced to 20 years in prison for "activities against the power

of the State." The following month, 136 priests, including Auxiliary Archbishop of Havana Monsignor Eduardo Boza Masvidal, were arrested and deported after the Interior Ministry had made a general denunciation of the Church.

With its schools gone, its staff of nuns decimated, its priests reduced to a quarter of their original number, much of its property confiscated, its services banned outdoors and tightly controlled indoors, and most of its active members and financial supporters in exile, the Church was shorn of its power and influence. In a tacit admission of its impotence, the Church in recent years has chosen the path of accommodation. Members of the clergy have voluntarily assisted in cane-cutting at harvest time and have supported the government (and Castro specifically) in the press and on the radio. Of key importance in establishing the new relationship was a pastoral letter dated April 10, 1969. In the letter the eight bishops, acting on the experiences of the Second Vatican Council, the pastoral constitution on "The Church in the Modern World," and the papal encyclical "Populorum Progressio," urged a halt to the US "economic blockade" of Cuba. Although one of the bishops had serious reservations about signing the letter and many parish priests refused to read it to their congregations, cooperation is clearly the main theme in the Church's present policy toward the government.

The government remains unimpressed by the Church's turn-around. It permits the Church to continue to exist only because its total destruction would scuttle the myth of freedom of religion that Castro finds so attractive and undercut Castro's relations with the many Church officials in Latin America who have adopted radical politico-economic positions in the past decade. Having challenged the Church, and won, Castro can afford to deal with it from a position of olympian superiority.

Other religious groups in Cuba, being far weaker than the Roman Catholic Church, escaped a similar confrontation with the regime. With few exceptions, they

also reacted more flexibly and were thus able to rebound more quickly after the initial years of the Revolution when any organization having connections abroad (as most of these groups did) was suspect. For the most part, they are now coexisting with the government in much the same fashion as the Catholic Church. Some evangelical sects such as the Jehovah's Witnesses, however, have drawn down upon themselves the government's full wrath for resisting service in the armed forces, insistence on maintaining the sabbath, and vigorous proselytizing. Their adamant attitude has brought them persistent persecution. In the Jewish community, (which in pre-Castro days numbered about 10,000), nine out of every ten members have chosen exile rather than accommodation. Despite this massive emigration, all five of the congregations existing in 1958 are still functioning, and the relations of the Jewish community with the government are considered satisfactory by both sides.

The Press

The subjugation of the Church occurred at the same time the free press was being liquidated. The term "free press," of course, must be qualified. Under Batista, and in fact even as far back as the mid-thirties, most newspapers were able to survive only because of government "subsidies" which took the form of outright bribes, government advertising, generous payments for publication of official notices, and direct financial support to under-paid reporters. In spite of these subsidies, so many newspapers dared to exhibit a degree of independence that Batista felt compelled to resort to frequent censorship. The subsidies, which for so long had constituted the very life's blood of a large segment of the press, may have served Batista poorly, but they proved extremely useful to his successor; they gave Castro the ammunition he needed to embarrass and discredit key figures in the news media and to throw open to serious question the ethics and credibility of the entire pre-revolutionary institution of journalism.

Castro's suppression of the free press was accomplished in several stages over a two-year period. In early January 1959, the Batista-owned daily Pueblo and the weekly Gente were confiscated. Also confiscated were Batista's Circuito Nacional Cubano (CNC) --a chain of radio broadcasting stations that spanned the island--another Batista-owned radio station (La Voz del Indio), the pro-Batista daily Alerta, the Santiago de Cuba dailies Prensa Universal and Diario Nacional, and three other Havana dailies Ataja, Manana, and Tiempo en Cuba. A second nationwide radio network, Union Radio, which belonged to the pro-Batista national confederation of trade unions, was taken over by members of the July 26 Movement.

In addition to the confiscations, which many Cubans believed were justified in light of the involvement of Batista and other hated officials of his administration, more than 50 newsmen were purged from the College of Journalists because of alleged connections with the previous administration. Moreover, the July 26 Movement's official newspaper Revolucion, ceased its clandestine operation and took over the plant and presses of the defunct Alerta. In its January 29, 1959 edition, it published a full list of the most prominent journalists and the amount of the bribes they had regularly received from the Batista government.

That Revolucion was speaking for Fidel rather than some disgruntled journalists intent on settling old scores could not be mistaken. Castro kept in close touch with the newspaper's operation and appointed as editor an old Communist Party drop-out and comrade-in-arms from the Cayo Confites expedition of 1947, Carlos Franqui Mesa. Franqui, a former typesetter for the Communist Party's daily Hoy and one-time editor of the Party's weekly newsletter Carta Semanal, had joined the July 26 Movement in mid-1955 shortly after it was established. At that time, he had founded Revolucion a weekly spokesman for the Movement. Later, he joined Castro in the Sierra Maestra and was assistant to Luis Orlando Rodriguez, chief of the Rebel Army's press and propaganda section.

Castro assured himself a second friendly representative in the press by giving another of the confiscated dailies to Rodriguez, whose daily La Calle, had been closed down as "incendiary" by Batista in June 1955. Rodriguez took over the plant formerly used by Pueblo and resumed publication of La Calle; he later re-christened a confiscated radio station in Havana as Radioperiodico La Calle (La Calle Radio Newspaper). Another of the confiscated newspapers went to a group of Communists who proceeded to resurrect the old Party daily Noticias de Hoy, more commonly known as Hoy, which had been proscribed by Batista in July 1953. A fourth went to the Revolutionary Directorate, a student-based group that maintained a guerrilla column in Las Villas Province through most of 1958, presumably as spoils of war; the Directorate used the facilities to publish Combate. The fifth confiscated newspaper became the pro-Castro Diario Libre, a daily of so little consequence that it was donated to the Marques Sterling School of Journalism as a workshop in March 1960.

Not satisfied with a predominance in the press, Castro did not hesitate to condemn publicly any journalist or newspaper that did not give him wholehearted support. In February 1959, barely a month after Batista's ouster, Castro threatened to suppress the well-known weekly humor magazine ZigZag for printing a cartoon that mildly poked fun at him. The following month, a series of editorials in the Havana daily Prensa Libre calling for elections and warning of Communist infiltration led Castro to accuse its publisher of "undermining the prestige of the Revolution," a charge that moved his audience to call for the publisher's execution. In the same month, Castro's fulminations against another Havana daily, El Crisol, persuaded its owner to adopt a neutral policy regarding the Revolutionary Government.

Castro's verbal attacks were supplemented by both official and unofficial pressures to keep the independent press in line. Government advertising was denied those newspapers that were not spokesmen for the regime, and private advertisers were intimidated into following suit. To block circulation of these papers, distributors

and dealers were threatened, delivery trucks were burned, and mobs were incited to sack newspaper offices. Favored newspapers, such as Revolucion and Hoy, were given exclusive access to key news stories and were permitted to send newsmen to cabinet meetings closed to the rest of the press. The favored few were also allowed to distribute their papers in the provinces and provided military aircraft to make deliveries. The competition was too much for most independent papers. The Havana daily Diario Nacional suspended publication in June 1959 and was taken over by the government. Publication under government control was continued until March 1960 when this newspaper's facilities, also, were given to the Imprenta Nacional.

To counter the influence of US newsreels, films, and press agencies in Cuba, Castro created the Cuban Institute of Motion Picture Art and Industry (ICAIC) in March 1959 and the Prensa Latina press agency in May of the same year. Alfredo Guevara, a Communist Party member of long standing who had traveled to Venezuela, Panama, and Colombia with Fidel in 1948 to represent the students of the University of Havana at the Latin American Students Congress in Bogota, was appointed head of ICAIC. He was given an initial budget of $5,000,000 to get the Institute on its feet. In addition to making documentaries, feature-length films, and newsreels with suitable propaganda for domestic audiences, ICAIC was tasked with reviewing and classifying all imported films. It performed its censorship function with vigor. By the end of 1960 it had banned 100 foreign films from Cuba, 87 of them US. The increasing censorship, lack of access to first-run theaters, increased import duties, and foreign currency regulations that prevented US distributors from removing profits from Cuba finally, in September 1960, brought a complete halt to the supply of US films. The following May the US motion picture distributing companies were nationalized.

To direct Prensa Latina, Castro chose Jorge Ricardo Masetti, an Argentine national whose previous journalistic experience included a two-year stint with Agencia Latina, Argentine ex-President Juan Peron's press agency. As a reporter for the Buenos Aires daily El Mundo and a radio station of the same name, Masetti had made two trips to the Sierra Maestra in the

spring-summer of 1958. During these visits, he spent time in both Fidel's and Che Guevara's camps, and late that year he published an account of his experiences highly favorable to Castro. Although Prensa Latina was originally envisaged as primarily a vehicle to channel Cuban propaganda and Havana's version of the news to the press, radio, and television of other Latin American countries, it eventually became the primary source of news for all Cuban radio and television stations, newspapers, and magazines.

Despite these strong moves by the government to control the field of public information, there were still a few opposing voices in the press as 1959 drew to a close. Castro acted again. In union elections late in 1959, at Castro's behest, old-time Communist Dagoberto Ponce became secretary general of the Graphic Arts Union to which the newspaper printers belonged. On January 11, 1960, Castro in effect authorized this union to censor newspaper content by ordering the union to "classify" press material not reflecting the "truth" about the Revolution. All editorials and articles that placed Castro or his administration in a bad light were to be accompanied by "explanatory" notes provided by the union. Thus were born the "coletillas," or "little tails," that were added to news items that criticized or embarrassed the government. A week later Jorge Zayas, editor of the Havana daily Avance, was confronted by his printers who refused to set an editorial he had sent them. Zayas had been harassed by the government since the previous November when he, along with 14 other Latin American journalists, had visited the US State Department while he was in the United States to attend a seminar on journalism. In December, the head of the national federation of unions, David Salvador, had demanded that he be shot and his newspaper confiscated. Castro himself denounced Zayas as a counterrevolutionary and labelled Avance "dangerous." The confrontation with the printers on January 18 was the final shot: Dagoberto Ponce, leading a gang of union toughs, took over the plant, and Zayas prudently sought asylum in the Ecuadorean Embassy. The government continued to publish the newspaper under the name Avance Revolucionario until December 1960, when it disappeared.

Four days after the seizure of Avance, the government confiscated the holdings of Amadeo Barletta, an Italian national and a multimillionaire whose extensive holdings included Ambar Motors (a General Motors distributorship), the Havana daily El Mundo, Radio El Mundo, the Tele-Mundo television network, and numerous other businesses. The government said it had taken this action because Barletta had done business with Batista, but did not explain why it had waited over a year before making the move. El Mundo continued to appear, first under Levi Marrero Artiles as editor, and then, after October 1960, under Luis Gomez Wanguemert; it was finally turned over to the University of Havana School of Journalism as a workshop and ceased publication in the late 1960s. Barletta found safety in the Italian Embassy.

Next to be swallowed up were El Pais and Excelsior; they were confiscated in March 1960. The editor of both papers, Dr. Guillermo Martinez Marques, had resigned in February after refusing to print a coletilla in El Pais, and the joint owners of the two had long since fled the island. All equipment and personnel of the two newspapers were transferred to the Imprenta Nacional.

Also in March, a running feud between the Communists and Luis Conte Aguero, popular radio and television commentator and long-time friend of Fidel, finally came to a head. A government-organized mob physically prevented Conte Aguero from making his usual broadcast on the CMQ-TV network on Friday, March 25, and that week-end Fidel and Raul Castro denounced him publicly. At that point, Conte Aguero fled to the Argentine Embassy. When Goar and Abel Mestre, the brothers who owned Radio Reloj and the CMQ radio and television networks, attempted to defend Conte Aguero and his anti-Communist stand, the government confiscated their properties, thus acquiring what were probably the most respected and technically efficient radio and television chains in Cuba.

On May 11, 1960, the prestigious, conservative, Catholic-oriented Havana daily Diario de la Marina,

founded in 1832, went the way of Avance. Dagoberto Ponce of the printers union and another Communist, Tirso Martinez from the journalists guild, led a gang of armed men who seized the plant and smashed the plates that were to be used to print an open letter from 300 of the newspaper's 450 employees supporting the publisher in his running battle with the government. The publisher, Jorge Ignacio Rivera, fled to the Peruvian Embassy on May 13. The take-over by armed force was vigorously denounced in Prensa Libre, and on May 16 this paper suffered the same fate. An armed mob seized control, and publisher Sergio Carbo went into exile via the Panamanian Embassy. Of the passing of Diario de la Marina and Prensa Libre, US Ambassador Philip Bonsal wrote: "The owners, editors, and top people of the papers in question behaved as bravely as one could ask. The reader reaction to this deprivation of unofficial news and comment was practically nil. So far as one could judge from the attitude of the public they had served, Diario de la Marina and Prensa Libre sank amid only the gentlest of ripples." Revolucion took advantage of the opportunity to secure better technical facilities and moved into the Prensa Libre plant. Revolucion's old presses were turned over the Communists' Hoy.

And still the seizures continued. The popular weekly magazine Bohemia, which had a significant circulation outside as well as inside Cuba and had been Castro's ardent and consistent supporter even during the years of Batista's rule, was seized after its owner, Miguel Angel Quevedo, requested asylum in the Venezuelan Embassy on July 18, 1960. Carteles, a weekly magazine resembling Bohemia and also owned by Quevedo, was likewise confiscated and turned over to Raul Castro's weekly military journal Verde Olivo. Carteles ceased publication but Bohemia, under government auspices, continued to appear, first under the editorship of Enrique de la Osa and later under Angel Guerra, its present editor. The English-language daily Havana Post discontinued publication on September 8, 1960, and the independent Times of Havana, published thrice weekly, was taken over by its workers on November 10 of the same year and ceased publication.

The conservative Havana daily Informacion managed to avoid confiscation, but could not survive financially. It went out of business on December 23, 1960.

By January 1961, Castro had completed his take-over of all Cuban public information media. All of the press, radio, television, and film industry was under his control. The number of dailies throughout the entire country was eventually reduced to seven: Granma, official organ of the Cuban Communist Party Central Committee (which was formed in late 1965 by the merger of Revolucion and Hoy); Juventud Rebelde, official organ of the Communist Party's youth arm; and one newspaper in each of the five provinces outside Havana. The number of radio stations has been cut to about 100, but the transmitter power of many has been increased and transmission frequencies have been shifted to ensure that the regime's propaganda can be heard throughout the island and that the people's access to foreign radio stations has been made much more difficult. Although the number of national television networks has been cut from three to two, facilities have been expanded so that this media of government propaganda is reaching more of the people. For example, a provincial network based on Santiago de Cuba is now operating in populous and previously neglected Oriente Province. The basic source of news, whether it be disseminated by newspaper, magazine, radio, television, or film, is provided by Prensa Latina, the government's press agency.

How could so many fundamental institutions be totally destroyed in such a short period of time? One answer is the uncanny ability of Fidel Castro to shape public opinion and to apply a carefully measured amount of force with precise timing. But just as important is the attitude of the people.

By late 1958, the Cuban masses had been subjected to so much terror and had been so grossly abused in so many ways for so long that they were ready to make a clean break with the past. The sterile "democratic" system of elections, the unbelievably corrupt executive officials, the subservient legislature, the inefficient and powerless judiciary, the

self-seeking business community, the aloof Church directed by foreigners, the opportunistic political parties, the venal military establishment, and the puppet press had all failed them. They did not demand radical changes in their system of government: indeed, Castro had led them to believe that the new governmental apparatus would be directed by honest, elected officials whose authority and tenure would be limited by the resurrected Constitution of 1940. On the other hand, they did not insist that their new leaders honor their earlier promises. They did not mourn the destruction or emasculation of the old institutions that had served them so poorly. Instead, they looked to the future with an emotional faith in their new messiah, willing to experiment, willing to be led, willing to follow the only force that had not yet discredited itself in their eyes--Fidel Castro and his Rebel Army. In effect, they permitted Castro to write his own ticket, and he did so with enthusiasm.

CHAPTER THREE: New Institutions Molded

In the process of denouncing, discrediting, and destroying Cuba's old institutions, Castro did not forget that he had to establish his own power base. He proceeded cautiously to create new, loosely organized institutions rooted in the masses that were so vulnerable to his manipulation. He rejected rigid structures, apparently because he feared they might eventually be converted into centers of opposition. He was supremely confident of his ability to sway the Cuban people so long as he had access to the mass media, but he was suspicious of any formal organization that could possibly switch its allegiance to someone else.

These misgivings explain why it took Castro six years to create a political party and why, after 15 years of his rule, the first party congress has yet to be held (one is scheduled for 1975). It also explains why he refused to honor his promise to reinstate the Constitution of 1940 and why the country's basic legal document is the hastily concocted and much-amended Fundamental Law of February 7, 1959, a set of statutes that was never intended to be permanent and that, in any case, is frequently ignored.

Nevertheless, Castro recognized that some institutions were needed to channel the energy of the masses and to give them a sense of participation--and thus a degree of responsibility (or even culpability)--in the revolutionary process. Moreover, by involving the Cuban people in the revolutionary struggle, Castro would be able to cast an aura of democratic authenticity over his rigid personal dictatorship. He, therefore, established a wide range of organizations that could embrace the entire population. For the peasants, there was the National Small Farmers Association (ANAP); for women, the Federation of Cuban Women (FMC); for the youth, the Rebel Youth Association (AJR) and later the Young Communists League (UJC), the Federation of University Students (FEU), the High

School Students Union (UES), and the Pioneers (UPC); workers had the Cuban Workers Central Organization (CTU); and adults had the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution (CDR). All of these were created by the Castro regime except for the FEU and the CTC, which were inherited from pre-revolutionary days and were reshaped to serve the new administration.

Cuban Workers Central Organization

Although it had earlier origins, organized labor in Cuba made its most significant strides toward maturity and power in the late 1930s. This was due largely to the coincidence of several key economic and political factors. Over the years, Cuban farmers and rural workers had gradually developed a sense of class consciousness and were able to identify with each other because from year to year the fate of each had become much more closely related to the mercurial fluctuations of the sugar economy. With both groups in the same economic boat, and given the great size of the sugar industry, there existed a large mass of people extremely vulnerable to exploitation by union organizers during times of financial stress. Into this atmosphere were thrust hundreds of urban revolutionaries and political activists who, as a result of the depression, had joined the ranks of the professional organizers in the budding labor union movement. Their organizational work was made easier by a ban on immigration from Haiti and Jamaica that had stabilized the labor force and by a concentration of capital in cane farming that tended to centralize labor in large units. The chaotic political situation in the years following the overthrow of President Machado in 1933 also stimulated organizational work. Labor leaders who could deliver the support of a large bloc of people to any of the vying political factions enjoyed a good deal of bargaining power.

The most powerful single labor group at this time--and the only national confederation in the country--was the Communist-led Cuban National Labor Confederation (CNOC). Conflicts with the government led to the dissolution of the CNOC in 1935, but three years later Batista, Cuba's de facto chief executive, negotiated an understanding with Communist leaders. In return for giving them a free hand to reorganize the labor movement, the Communists promised their political support. In January 1939, a new national labor organization, the Cuban Workers Confederation (CTC), was established, with Communist Lazaro Pena Gonzalez as its secretary general.

So agreeable was the working relationship between the Communists and Batista that much of Cuba's social legislation was written into the Constitution of 1940 at the Communists' suggestion (with the support, of course, of the Autenticos and other political parties and groups). The new constitution recognized the state's obligation to provide work for all who desired it, the right of workers to organize, and the right of unions to strike and boycott. It also provided for written, collective contracts, enforceable by law; minimum wages, an eight-hour work day and a 48-hour work week; social security; and abolition of child labor. This cooperation also brought two top Communists, Juan Marinello and Carlos Rafael Rodriguez, into Batista's cabinet as ministers without portfolio after Batista was elected to the presidency in 1940.

Pena and the Communists continued to dominate the labor movement until 1947, when President Grau's labor minister (and successor) Carlos Prio Socarras granted official recognition not to Pena's CTC, but to a new CTC organized by Grau's and Prio's Autentico Party. Gradually, most of the member unions of Pena's CTC, pressured by the legal right of the Labor Ministry to grant or withhold recognition and registration of unions, defected to the new CTC headed by ex-Communist Angel Cofino. In

an internal power struggle, politically independent Cofino was replaced by Autentico Eusebio Mujal (also an ex-Communist) in April 1949. When Batista ousted Prio in 1952, Mujal tried to support Prio with a general strike. When this failed, he unabashedly transferred his loyalties to the new chief of state, and he remained at the head of the CTC until Batista was routed by Castro in 1959. During Batista's corrupt and repressive reigns, union leaders abandoned their ideological goals and became isolated from the workers. Not only the CTC, but some unaffilliated Communist-led unions reached working agreements with Batista. When Fidel Castro, from his guerrilla bastion in the Sierra Maestra, called for a general strike to topple Batista in April 1958, both Mujal and the Communists refused to cooperate. For Castro, this was a serious political defeat.

In October 1958, however, the Communist union leadership, hoping to be in a position to assist in the take-over of the CTC by July 26 Movement officials, joined Castro's underground labor front, the National Worker Front (FON). But the labor leaders of the July 26 Movement could see little reason for sharing the victor's spoils with a group so late in climbing aboard the revolutionary bandwagon. As a result, the Communists suffered a crushing defeat in late May 1959 at the congress of the largest trade union federation in the CTC, the National Federation of Sugar Workers. In elections in the other 32 federations, the Communists were left in full control of only three federations and in partial control of only another three. To all appearances, they had little chance of regaining control of the CTC when that body held its tenth congress in mid-November 1959.

Some time in the summer of 1959, however, Castro reached a working agreement with the Communists and three of the 13 Executive Committee nominees placed before the congress for its consideration were Communist Party members. The July 26 Movement labor leaders were furious, and the

congress degenerated into a brawl. Although Castro intervened personally to restore order, the delegates ignored him and CTC Secretary General David Salvador, who also supported the Communists, and voted overwhelmingly to reject the trio. Castro then ignored the results of the election and had Salvador offer a new slate that excluded both known Communists and anti-Communists. This group was composed of individuals who could be easily controlled by the regime, and, under strong pressure from Castro, the delegates approved the list in the name of "unity."

The congress also approved the withdrawal of the CTC from the Interamerican Regional Organization of Workers and, more important, the creation of a CTC purge committee ostensibly to weed out Batistianos from union leadership. Many of Batista's supporters had, in fact, fled the island in the last days of 1958, and almost none of those remaining held union offices. Thus, from the beginning the purge committee was aimed at eliminating the anti-Communists who, at the congress, had given Castro his first defeat since coming to power. The committee accomplished its mission in the last two months of 1959 and the early months of the following year. Even David Salvador, the secretary general who had presided over the suicide of the free CTC, was sacked and later thrown into jail, where he apparently remains today.

Although resistance to the new government continued within some of the individual union federations, notably the electrical workers, the CTC--declawed and defanged--never again was a real or even a potential threat to the government. Instead of functioning as a medium for the workers to convey their grievances to the government, the CTC quickly became a government tool to press for greater productivity, longer working hours, and "voluntary" contributions to finance industrialization. It succeeded in the latter two tasks in varying degrees but has never been able to promote the productivity increase that the government has sought.

In his search for the magic organizational formula that would raise productivity as well as ensure that the CTC could not become a power base for opposition to the government, Castro has conducted periodic shake-ups of the entire CTC structure. At its 11th Congress in November 1960, the CTC's 33 federations were replaced by 25 national unions, and at the 12th Congress in August 1966 the number of national unions was reduced from 25 to 14.

Still another reorganization began in late 1970 as a result of Castro's call on July 26 of that year for a campaign to revitalize all of the country's mass organizations, The process was still in progress in November 1973 when the CTC--with a total of 22 unions--held its 13th Congress. Additional unions will probably be formed as more of the work force is brought under union jurisdiction.

The call to revitalize the mass organizations stemmed from the politico-economic situation resulting from the failure to meet the sugar harvest goal of 10 million tons, and also from critics abroad such as Karol and Dumont, who complained that the Cuban people had no say in decisions directly affecting their lives. In response, the union hierarchy, along with the leaders of the other mass organizations, quickly developed a fiery passion for popular elections within their respective structures. It is doubtful, however, that anyone was fooled by the election gambit. Cuban Communist Party officials were in control of the candidate selection process, and the new union officials--at least those in the upper levels --were bound to be, as in the past, representatives of the government, not the workers.

But there were some positive results. At the lower levels, the unions undoubtedly received an infusion of new blood if for no other reason than that the larger number of unions required a corresponding increase in the number of officials.

Moreover, one facet of the reorganization involved the initiation of a trend away from professional cadres, which caused a reduction in the number of permanent officials, and an increase in part-time union leaders. The presence of these newcomers--who must fulfill their union responsibilities in addition to holding down a full-time job--may to a degree resolve Castro's complaint that the old union structure had failed to serve as a channel for informing the national leadership of the problems of the masses. But it is difficult to believe that the revised union officialdom will be more willing than its predecessors to pass bad news up the organizational ladder. The Cubans have demonstrated a decided predilection for bureaucracy--revolution or no revolution--and bureaucrats seem to have an aversion to passing potentially unpleasant news to their superiors--presumably out of fear that it will be interpreted as an admission of an inability to handle problems.

The Carrot and the Stick

The departure in late 1970 from a strict adherence to the principle of moral incentives, and the enactment in early 1971 of the so-called Vagrancy Law were acknowledgements that organized labor had failed in one of its most important missions--the elimination of absenteeism. To strengthen the unions' hand in enforcing worker discipline, Castro allowed them to distribute consumer goods to the workers. Only those who maintained good job attendance records and who met or exceeded production goals could expect the privilege of purchasing whatever goods were available. This novel method of dispensing goods may give the unions a small amount of leverage over the workers, but it is unlikely to improve labor discipline significantly until the supply of goods is considerably increased. A worker can be forgiven for not putting forth his best effort if he is competing with 300 other workers at his factory for permission to

purchase from a stock of goods that includes, for example, only one refrigerator, two bicycles, and ten alarm clocks. A further drawback to this method of distribution is that "exemplary" workers may become a privileged class whose access to much sought after consumer goods may act, not as a stimulant to increase production, but as a divisive force that convinces the average worker that there is no use putting great effort into his job because the stiff competition places the so-called fruits of labor beyond his reach.

To offset the inherent structural weaknesses which arise from the staffing of the majority of positions in the new union system with non-professional, part-time personnel, the unions have been organized as much as possible along lines parallel to the government's own administrative framework rather than on a functional basis. Thus, the Ministry of Education has a corresponding National Union of Workers in Education and the Sciences; the Ministry of Light Industry has a National Union of Light Industry Workers; the Ministry of Basic Industry, a National Union of Basic Industry Workers; and so on through the governmental bureaucracy. Even Raul Castro's Armed Forces Ministry got in step and formed the National Union of Revolutionary Armed Forces Civilian Workers.

After all this revamping, the CTC is little more than a paper organization. Its only remaining function is to serve as a channel for communications between the leadership and the workers, but then this is apparently all the Castro regime expects of it. As Raul Castro said: "In socialism, a principal function of the unions is to serve as a vehicle for the guidelines, directions, and goals which the revolutionary administration, the administration of the working class, must take to the heart of the working masses to convert these masses into the physical force that will carry out and further these goals at every moment. The Party is the vanguard that exists,

guides, and fulfills its real role to the same extent that it is projected into the masses. The unions are the most powerful link between the Party and the working masses. This is one of the main functions they fulfill within the socialist society... The unions are essential elements in the construction of socialism, not only because through them the Party guidelines reach all the working masses, but because through them the feelings, concerns, and initiatives of all the masses must reach the Party." He said that "union sections must pay attention to living and working conditions," but identified productivity and labor discipline as the "main tasks confronting the working class of our country."

Raul specified that the sections, the lowest level in the union structure, were to be the guardians of the workers. He said the sections were responsible for "gathering the workers' concerns, problems and needs, analyzing them with the heads of the units and contributing in that way, to the extent of our possibilities, toward resolving them." Thus, workers' grievances go not through the union structure, but through the administrative apparatus of the government ministry or agency in charge of their particular work center. The labor movement in Cuba has indeed come upon hard times.

Committees for the Defense of the Revolution

In September 1960, Castro went to the United Nations in New York to denounce the United States for preparing to invade Cuba. On returning home, he delivered an address in which he expanded on the invasion theme and called for the organization of a vast, nationwide network of neighborhood "Committees for the Defense of the Revolution" (CDRs) to buttress the country's weak security apparatus and combat an alien-inspired fifth

column. His speech, before hundreds of thousands of Cubans gathered in front of the Presidential Palace in Havana, was frequently punctuated by the sound of exploding noise bombs, presumably set off by the government to underscore the subversive threat to the regime.

CDR units were immediately organized in almost every block and in almost all work centers in the cities and towns throughout Cuba. By the end of 1960, a total of 5,581 committees had been formed. Their prime task was to uncover spies and counterrevolutionaries by notifying the police at the first sign of unusual activities or the unexplained appearance of new people in the neighborhood. This mandate was often very broadly interpreted by CDR members. A broad range of activity, from grumbling about the government to making purchases on the black market, constituted sufficient grounds for denunciation, depending on the revolutionary fervor or personal bias of the CDR observer.

At the time of the Bay of Pigs invasion in April 1961, the CDRs were instrumental in rounding up in quick order tens of thousands of suspected counterrevolutionaries, most of whom were not released until after weeks or months of incarceration under the most primitive conditions. After the invaders had been defeated, the CDR National Directorate was ordered to expand the organization to 100,000 committees, and by the end of the year it had enrolled 798,703 members in 107,000 committees, handily surpassing the goal. Moreover, the CDRs no longer centered their organizational efforts in urban areas. In response to increasing counterrevolutionary activity in the rural areas of Oriente, Camaguey, Las Villas, and Pinar del Rio provinces, they advanced into the countryside (by 1963, 38,718 of the organization's 104,425 base committees were located in rural areas: 25,943 in peasant areas, 8,949 in People's Farms, and 3,826 in mountainous regions).

At the same time, the role of the CDRs

expanded. The organization was tasked with the "Butter Census"--gathering statistics on the amounts of edible fats and oils on hand as a prelude to rationing. The CDRs quickly provided the government with the data and thus assisted in the regulation of consumer commodities in the face of growing shortages and price speculation. This success opened up a whole new field of possibilities and converted an organization that was essentially political into one that could also perform valuable administrative and economic tasks.

The government was quick to exploit this capability and in 1962 gave the CDRs the responsibility for distributing ration cards to the population. The organization also performed valuable services in the field of public health. It conducted the country's first vaccination campaign, collected over 8,000 donations in a blood drive, and held more than 100,000 meetings to educate the public in basic sanitation measures. Its primary mission, however, was still political. It established and operated Study Circles and Revolutionary Instruction Circles to discuss revolutionary theory and the writings and speeches of the country's political leaders. To keep these "circles" supplied with study materials, the CDR National Directorate began publishing a monthly magazine Con la Guardia en Alto (with the Guard Up) in October 1961 and periodically printed and distributed political tracts, such as Blas Roca's The Fundamentals of Socialism in Cuba and collections of shorter political works by various authors. The CDRs also served as government claques by sending telegrams of support to the communications media when a new government program or policy was announced, and if a receptive audience were needed for Fidel or some other top official, the CDRs could always be counted on to provide on short notice a sea of faces that cheered and whistled at all the right places.

In succeeding years, however, the increasing capability of the regular security forces to detect

and suppress counterrevolutionary guerrilla bands in the countryside and to infiltrate and liquidate groups of anti-Castro plotters in the cities permitted the CDRs to devote more attention to less pressing matters, and the government, anxious to exploit the CDRs' ability to act quickly in situations requiring a mass response, gradually assigned more and more administrative duties to the "cederistas." Its monolithic structure and extremely broad base made the CDR organization ideal for such tasks as supervising the operation of local grocery stores and butcher shops to guard against black market sales and ration card abuses, organizing scrap drives to recover metals to be melted down and reused, repairing washouts and potholes in roads, collecting books to start or improve local libraries, constructing thatched-roof schoolhouses in rural areas, distributing doses of anti-polio vaccine to children, organizing campaigns for conducting cytological tests for women, collecting used jars and bottles to ease the country's glass shortage, enrolling poorly educated workers in educational improvement classes, conducting campaigns to improve the appearance of public places, assisting in registration of young men for the draft, and managing blood donor drives among its members. Any problem that required rapid mobilization of the masses or that involved contact with the entire population was passed on to the CDRs. Eventually, the CDRs became so involved in these administrative tasks that they assumed many of the responsibilities of local government in cities and towns across the country. In the fall of 1967, CDR members were elected to virtually all local government posts in Cuba's urban areas.

By 1967, membership was reported to be 2,237,652, but many members were apparently counted more than once. Some seem to have demonstrated their revolutionary commitment by joining the local CDR where they lived and another CDR where they worked. After the committees in the work centers had been abolished later in the year, the organi-

zation's membership dropped to 1,704,589. By 1968, however, over half a million new members were enrolled, and in the spring of that year the CDRs received one of their most important economic assignments--the operation of the 58,000 small businesses that had been confiscated by the government in March, April and May. In 1969, they also were charged with assisting in the rehabilitation of ex-convicts and juvenile delinquents. For this purpose, the "Social Prevention Front" was formed. Members of the new front visited parents of juvenile delinquents and problem children and urged them to guarantee that the offending child would mend his ways and attend school regularly. People recently released from prison were also visited and counselled on how they could return smoothly into society. The families of recently convicted criminals also got attention to ensure that the loss of a breadwinner would not create insurmountable problems for those at home.

The following year the CDRs received another assignment; to build a bridge between the people and the military. Again a "front" was formed, this time the CDR-FAR (Revolutionary Armed Forces) Front. Young men waiting to be drafted were briefed on what to expect in the service and were given sendoff ceremonies by the local CDR, which then publicized whatever honors the draftees might earn during their military careers. The aim, presumably, was to reduce the number of young men who failed to register for the draft, failed to report when drafted, or deserted after being inducted.

The CDRs participated in many heavy construction projects in 1971 and 1972. They mobilized large numbers of 'cederistas' to serve as laborers in constructing an addition to the Latin American Sports Stadium in Havana, in expanding the power plant at Regla in the outskirts of Havana, and in many other construction projects across the country. Nothing seems to be too difficult, too complex, or too big for the CDRs.

CDR Organization and Philosophy

The fundamental unit of the CDR organization is the base or block committee, which is called a Committee for the Defense of the Revolution. Most have from ten to fifty members, although some are larger. Each committee is responsible for a specific territory, such as an apartment house, a portion of a city block, or a section of a small town, and is staffed by a president, an organizer, an officer for vigilance, another for public health, and others for whatever types of work the committee may be performing such as the Social Prevention and CDR-FAR Fronts. All are volunteers. The next organizational unit is the zone, which is made up of a number of base committees, also staffed by volunteers. Ten to fifteen zones make up a sectional or municipal committee; several sectional or municipal committees, a region; and a number of regions, a province. The highest level is the national directorate, which oversees the six provincial directorates.

The professional staffing of the CDRs begins at the sectional municipal level, the section being the urban equivalent of the municipality. The chief of a sectional directorate is called the coordinator, and he (or she) and the directorate's organizer are full-time, paid officials. If the directorate is a particularly large one, it may have an additional one or two professionals. Officers at the base level are elected by the members of the local CDR and any member can be put up as a candidate; at the zone level, however, a slate of acceptable candidates is drawn up by the sectional or municipal directorate and submitted to the members of the CDRs of the zone. Similarly, the regional directorate selects a slate of candidates for the sectional or municipal level. Officers at higher levels are sent to the National School of Vigilance, which was established to train CDR cadres. Special courses are also

offered to CDR members by various government organizations, particularly the Interior Ministry.

The present chief of the organization, CDR National Coordinator Jorge Lezcano Perez, replaced Luis Gonzalez Marturelos on October 26, 1973. Gonzalez Marturelos had held the position since July 27, 1966. He succeeded the first CDR National Coordinator, Jose Matar, a member of the "old" Communist Party, who was caught up in the "micro-faction" purge in January 1968 and ousted from his seat on the present Cuban Communist Party Central Committee. According to Gonzalez Marturelos, there were 67,000 CDRs with a total membership of 3,222,147 in September 1970, but at that time he expressed disappointment with the quality of many of the cederistas. Undoubtedly reflecting the soul-searching, self critical mood that Castro had displayed in previous months, Gonzalez Marturelos admitted that not all members participated actively in the tasks assigned the CDRs and lamented that "at times we have not been able to turn over responsibilities to a majority of the members of the organization." Nevertheless, only two years later, Castro claimed that the CDRs had some 4,236,000 members, or about 70 percent of the entire adult population.

In the intervening biennium, little had been done to change the CDRs, despite Castro's call for a revitalization of the mass organizations. A CDR National Assembly in December 1971 had made minor changes in the structure of the provincial directorates and an attempt had been made to fill some of the vacant positions by shifting personnel, but no action had been taken to purge the committees of the hordes of opportunists who enjoyed the benefits of membership but shouldered few of the CDRs' burdens. Indeed, no such action is likely. To reduce the membership by including only activists would transform the CDRs into an elitist rather than a mass organization and would deny the very reason for their existence--the incorporation of the masses into the Revolution.

In establishing the CDRs, Castro created a political mechanism by which he could control the extremism that he encouraged in his speeches. The original CDRs by their very nature constituted a negative organization that appealed primarily to proponents, rather than opponents, of change, and to individuals that tended toward radicalism rather than moderation. Conservatives and moderates might join the base CDR to "prove" their patriotism and forestall criticism of their revolutionary fervor, but they could hardly expect to assume leadership positions higher up in the organization. These positions were reserved for those whose basic qualification for leadership was an exemplary revolutionary attitude, i.e., a total commitment to Castro and to whatever policies he might promote. The nature of the organization and the character of its leadership led inevitably to an oversimplification of political definitions and to a polarization in which issues were cast in terms of black and white with no middle ground. Those not indiscriminately for the Revolution were judged to be against it and only two categories of political persuasion existed: revolutionary and counterrevolutionary. Castro, of course, deliberately fostered this situation, not so much to uncover "imperialist" spies as to intimidate those among his own people who might oppose his methods of remaking the country's social structure.

As Castro became firmly entrenched and the need for intimidation diminished, the role of the CDRs changed. Although the primary mission has remained the same, i.e., vigilance against the counterrevolution, its orientation has shifted from negative to positive and celebrations of CDR anniversaries in recent years have emphasized the constructive contributions the organization has made in addition to its successes in vigilance. CDR members still fill many positions in local government, and membership in the CDRs is a key prerequisite to any form of personal advancement

because it indicates that the individual, rather than observing the Revolution as an uncommitted bystander, has deliberately chosen to become involved and to take an active part in helping to achieve the Revolution's goals. Although the motivation behind this choice on frequent occasion may be less than ideal, the individual has nevertheless made a conscious decision to participate in the revolutionary process and has rejected both non-participation and outright opposition. This is important psychologically because it indicates that the individual, despite a possible reluctance to cooperate fully, has acknowledged that conditions are such that cooperation has more advantages, or at least fewer disadvantages, than either opposition or neutral ground. Application for membership in the CDRs means that individual inertia has been overcome, motion has been started in the right direction, and that the first step--albeit cautious and hesitant in many cases--has been taken toward acceptance of the changes that have drastically reshaped Cuban society. It would thus be counterproductive to purge the CDRs of non-activist members; to do so could reverse this process of gradual acceptance of the new regime's radical bent and exclude from the Revolution the very people for whom it was begun.

As the mass organization with the widest base, the CDRs are Castro's strongest grass roots power source, as well as one of the most useful administrative tools available to the government. Even considering the number of half-hearted members in its ranks, it far outweighs the other mass organizations, especially the CTC, in importance. By comparison, the women's federation might be ranked a distant second.

The Federation of Cuban Women

The mass organization for women, the FMC, is

built along lines similar to those of the CDRs. Its primary task is "to raise the ideological, political, cultural, and scientific education of women in order to incorporate them into the tasks assigned them by the Revolution, and so, to allow them the role they are entitled to play in the new society." The FMC was founded on August 23, 1960, predating the CDRs by about a month, but some Cubans trace its origins back to 1934 when the Communist Party established the National Union of Women. Vilma Espin Guillois de Castro, a veteran of the Sierra Maestra guerrilla campaign and wife of Raul Castro, has been president of the FMC since its creation, although in recent years most of the day-to-day business has been handled by FMC Secretary General Dora Carcano.

When the FMC's structure was completed in February 1961, the organization received its first assignment: educating farm girls. Some 13,000 girls were sent to Havana to enroll in classes in sewing, dress making, and general academic subjects provided by the FMC. (Also participating in these courses were many former prostitutes who were unemployed because of the new regime's view that prostitution is an unwelcome residue of the pre-revolutionary era.) In addition, the FMC organized schools in which 1,000 kindergarten teachers were trained, and took part in a massive national campaign to eradicate illiteracy, a campaign that caused 1961 to be dubbed the Year of Education.

When the First FMC Congress was held in 1962, the Federation consisted of 376,571 women organized into 9,012 delegations, the basic FMC structural unit. As time passed and more members were enrolled, the FMC expanded into other fields, working with various government ministries to set up specialized training or service units. In conjunction with the Armed Forces Ministry, the FMC organized and staffed the Medical Auxiliary Corps of the Revolutionary Armed Forces which saw action during the Bay of Pigs invasion in April

1961. In cooperation with the Ministry of Education, it set up classes in personal hygiene and in first aid. Heeding the plea of the Labor Ministry, the FMC conducted campaigns to find women to replace men in industry and commerce who had been sent to the countryside to cut cane; eventually the women, too, were enlisted to help in all forms of agricultural work. To permit mothers to hold full-time jobs, the FMC established Nursery Centers; 197 centers with approximately 23,000 children were operating by 1967. In cooperation with the CDRs, the FMC took part in vaccination campaigns, in juvenile delinquency prevention programs, and in city beautification projects, and, following the example of the CDRs, it set up Political Study Circles so that the ideological indoctrination of its members would not be neglected. By 1970, the FMC had become so involved in enlisting women in the national work force that Light Industry Minister Nora Frometa, herself a former secretary general of the FMC in Camaguey Province, petitioned the FMC at its Eighth National Plenum in December to recruit immediately 6,000 women to fill jobs in her ministry. At the same meeting, it was announced that the FMC had grown to 1,343,098 members, 54 percent of all females in Cuba over the age of 14, and the number of Nursery Centers had reached 429. In the following year, Vilma Espin described as one of the FMC's "most important tasks" the addition of 100,000 women to the labor force, a step that most Cuban housewives seemed extremely reluctant to take. Vilma also mentioned that some 300,000 FMC members were attending the monthly meetings of the Political Study Circles. In 1972, the FMC had a total of 1,581,089 members in 33,380 delegations and 5,834 blocks. There were also 81,541 FMC members serving in 7,034 FMC-ANAP Mutual Aid Brigades--groups formed in farming areas to work small farms while the farmers took part in the sugar harvest--and 55,886 members working in Sanitation Brigades which, in cooperation with the Public Health Ministry, conduct courses in basic sanitation practices and public health.

The FMC is something of a small scale copy of the CDRs. Like the CDR, large numbers of FMC members have not measured up to the standards expected of them. Vilma Espin admitted in early 1972 that the FMC's problem "of highest importance" was the small amount of "activism on the base level of the organization." She indicated that when this problem was pinpointed and examined at the Ninth National Plenum in 1971, it was found that only 95,206 members, or seven percent of the membership, carried the burden of the organization's activities and responsibilities. The remaining 93 percent had no assigned tasks. By August 1972, the number of activists had grown to 287,071, approximately 20 percent of the membership. Of the 220,814 FMC officers at the various levels of the organization, only 1,969 were professional cadres; the rest were volunteers.

Despite its voluntary nature and the questionable enthusiasm of many of its members, the FMC, like the CDRs, must be considered a plus for Castro. The ability of the FMC to weather the difficult period in the summer and fall of 1970 without major change, particularly in view of the radical shake-ups of the CTC and the youth groups, is an indication of Castro's faith in the organization's leadership. The FMC has served him well over the years and will undoubtedly continue to be useful in the future. The same, however, can hardly be said of the small farmers' association.

The Small Farmers Association

The association for owners of small farms (ANAP) is described in official literature as one more of Cuba's mass organizations, but, in fact, it differs greatly from the CDRs, the FMC, the CTC, and the various youth groups. The ANAP is an outgrowth of the agricultural organizations of prerevolutionary days; the vast majority of

Cuba's private farmers belonged to at least one of the 300 such groups. The largest of these was the Colonos Association, made up of individuals--colonos--who raised sugar cane either on their own land or on land rented from sugar mills. The colonos raised most of the country's sugar cane and some of them were large operators who depended on hired laborers to plant, cultivate, and harvest the cane. The Colonos Association was invited to send delegates to the National Sugar Industry Meeting scheduled to be held in Havana in December 1960 to plan the first "people's" sugar harvest, but the Association, dominated by the larger cane growers, refused to participate, fearful of any involvement with the government. The government's National Agrarian Reform Institute (INRA) therefore called a meeting of the Association's small farm owners, and engineered an election which resulted in the seating of new officers. The new officials then asked the government to withdraw recognition from the old leadership and change the name of the organization. In conjunction with these moves, Castro addressed the National Sugar Industry Meeting and called for the formation of a single new group to take the place of these associations. This carefully orchestrated exercise brought about the establishment of the ANAP on January 26, 1961, founded "as a vehicle for organizing the peasants and for bringing to them, in an organized manner, the benefits of the Revolution."

By the time the ANAP held its First National Congress in May 1961, an estimated 40,000 colonos, 20,000 coffee planters, 4,000 potato farmers, and 20,000 tobacco growers had deserted the old farmers' groups and joined the new body. Membership was nominally restricted to farmers with holdings of less than five caballerias, although some larger farms worked in common by large families without benefit of wage labor were also included if the owners were active revolutionaries. The ANAP was charged with organizing credit grants

to small farmers and guaranteeing the supply of materials needed for production. In line with this, the Small Farmers' Machinery Service was set up for the purpose of making available state-owned farm machinery for preparing the land for planting.

In theory, the ANAP would benefit both the farmer and the government by making farm work easier and at the same time increasing production and productivity; in practice, it proved something less than satisfactory. It could hardly deliver financial and technical assistance to the farmers under the chaotic conditions that existed in 1961. The government was ill-prepared to assume responsibility for the continued operation of all the businesses and financial institutions it had inherited as a result of Castro's nationalizations and confiscations, and thousands of trained and experienced technical, administrative, and managerial personnel--the very ones the new government needed most--awed by the radical turn of events, sought refuge abroad. Moreover, the ANAP had neither the staff nor the backing from Havana needed for it to function effectively. Despite the government's oft-repeated pledge to respect the farmers' rights of ownership of their lands, the property of farmers who had cooperated with counterrevolutionary bands was confiscated. In addition, local officials, without legal basis, attempted to force farmers to sell their produce exclusively to the state; the farmers were much more interested in selling their crops on the open market and taking advantage of the rise in prices accompanying a sharp rise in the nation's purchasing power. As a result, the farmers became more and more disenchanted with the government, and many chose to throw in their lot with the anti-government guerrillas.

At one point the rebels enjoyed such strong support from the peasants in the Escambray region of Las Villas Province that the government was obliged to adopt the same measures Batista had

used in the Sierra Maestra in 1958 and relocated many of the inhabitants to the westernmost wilds of Pinar del Rio Province.

In March 1962 a meeting of all provincial and many local agricultural officials was held to examine the problem. Castro himself conducted the investigation, and after the meeting, changes were made in farm produce marketing policies and attempts were made to improve the flow of supplies and farm machinery to the small farms. At the Second National Congress, the ANAP was stripped of its administrative responsibilities leaving it only "those tasks pertaining to a mass organization."

The ANAP survived the Second Agrarian Reform, in which all farms over five caballerias were nationalized without indemnification, largely because the confiscations were carried out at the same time--October 1963--that hurricane Flora devastated much of eastern Cuba. With over a thousand dead and tens of thousands homeless, few Cubans had any time or sympathy to waste on the comparative few who had fallen victim to the government's voracious appetite for land. The situation may well have been very different had the hurricane not served as a convenient, lengthy diversion; many small farmers continued to give the ANAP only very grudging cooperation and the alternative of the anti-Castro guerrilla bands was not definitely eliminated until two years later.

Even after the disappearance of the guerrillas, peasant resistance to the Revolution continued. At the Third National Congress of the ANAP in 1967, for example, it was acknowledged that serious weaknesses existed in the ANAP. Although membership continued to grow, reaching 223,805 at the time of the National Plenum in December 1970, this was primarily because the farmers realized the futility of trying to continue farming outside the ANAP structure.

The ANAP had scheduled its Fourth National Congress for May 1969, but this timetable fell victim to the monumental administrative chaos that was mushrooming uncontrollably as the 1970 sugar harvest drew closer. Before the Congress was finally held in December 1971, the ANAP made the motions of going through the "democratization" process of elections and assemblies at the base level which Castro called for in July 1970. Actually, the elections were as meaningless as those of the other mass organizations. The assemblies, allegedly attended by 400,000 peasants (i.e., ANAP members and their dependents) throughout the country, resulted in no noteworthy changes either in the ANAP structure or in its leadership. Jose "Pepe" Ramirez Cruz, the "old" Communist who had served as liaison between his party and Raul Castro in the latter part of Raul's independent guerrilla campaign in the Sierra Cristal in 1958, continued as president of the association--it has had no other chief--and the ANAP leadership continued to fault the small farm owner for "idleness, open-market sales, sharecropping, and lawlessness." A particularly irritating point seemed to be the inability of the farmers to understand the need to sell everything in excess of local family consumption to the government collection agencies. The government's prices, of course, were much lower than the farmer could obtain on the black market; in some case, the farmer even seems to have preferred black market bartering to selling because money had lost its value due to extreme shortages of clothing and other consumer goods.

During the Fourth National Congress, the Castro regime gave signs that it was growing weary of the peasants' resistance to official economic policies and their reluctance to accept the philosophy of the Revolution. The Congress adopted "agreements" that were unmistakable threats to recalcitrant farmers; the agreements held that the ANAP "should participate actively in the handling and distribution of material

resources, taking into account the attitude and merits of each peasant." If a farmer were uncooperative, the government could cut off his access to seed, fertilizer, insecticides, or farm implements. Proceedings of the Congress made clear that the government was determined to force the farmers into the new mold that the Revolution had cast for them: "The participation of the Cuban peasantry in the economic and social development of the country must be through the progressive incorporation of their lands and labor force into the integral plans which make possible the massive use of technology and the mechanization of agriculture as the most ideal way of emerging from underdevelopment." The Congress held that the "isolation and dispersion (of the peasantry)--logical consequences of the hard reality of the pre-revolutionary phase--must be eradicated by an evolutionary process in which the peasant participates consciously because the agricultural individualism that was fostered by the old system is incompatible with the present and future needs of agricultural-livestock production and social development." The participation of the peasantry in the Revolutionary process should be strictly voluntary, the Congress reaffirmed, "but this principle of willingness shall not limit the right of the Revolutionary State to seize lands for the exceptional reasons indicated in the law and for reasons of social and economic benefit. Thus, the Congress justified the increasing number of seizures of small farms, while at the same time sustaining Castro's promise that the small farm owners would not suffer expropriation, the distinction being that farms are being nationalized on a piecemeal basis, depending on the needs of the government, but not en masse, as occurred during the imposition of the Agarian Reform Laws of 1959 and 1963.

To reduce the peasants' isolation, considered "the greatest hindrance to the plans of cultural and political improvement," the Congress called for the distribution of battery-powered radios

to the peasants and also for the development of community centers where peasants could be available for political indoctrination. To facilitate indoctrination, the Congress recommended that radio broadcasts of programs for peasants be rescheduled to more convenient times for the farmers. For the same purpose, the Congress urged the creation of more social clubs and called upon ANAP officials at the base level to take a greater interest in improving the enrollment, attendance, and advancement of peasant children in primary schools.

The future of the independent-minded farmers is dim. The Castro regime has decreed that the day of the "agricultural individualist" is over. Even the peasant who cooperates and voluntarily joins a development plan by turning his farm over to the government may get shortchanged. According to the Declaration of the Fourth Congress, no matter what the value of the surrendered farm may be, the peasant joining the development plan will not be reimbursed to the extent that he no longer needs to work. The income he receives as a result of giving up his land will not be equivalent to one hundred percent of his economic need nor will it even comprise his main income because this must come from his "integration in social labor."

Despite the rosy rhetoric emerging from the meetings of the mass organizations and the other government agencies, it is evident that the ANAP has had little success in incorporating the small farm owner into the Revolution. The peasants are the most conservative and most independent facet of Cuban society today. If they did not make such an important contribution to agricultural production, the peasants doubtless would have disappeared long ago. Gradually, however, more and more peasant land is passing into the national patrimony. The peasant and his way of life are inevitably doomed under the present political system. This means, of course, that the ANAP--so inept at meeting the small farmers' needs and so ineffective as a means of harnessing the potential of the peasantry--is

also doomed. The liquidation process could take decades or weeks, depending entirely on Fidel's whim. More than likely he will proceed slowly, but the 150,000 or 200,000 small farmers still in Cuba could suffer the same fate as the 58,000 small business entrepreneurs who were swallowed up in a few short months during the explosive Revolutionary Offensive in the spring of 1968.

In sum, the ANAP is far from being a model "organization of the masses." Its structure is weak, it apparently enjoys little prestige with the majority of small farm owners, and it has served the regime as poorly as it has served the peasants. The farmer seems to look upon the ANAP as a force attempting to separate him from the only thing in which he has faith--the soil he tills--and thus is a force to be resisted. The ANAP is at best a flag of truce in the continuing struggle between the peasants and the guerrilla elite.

Youth Organizations

The importance that the Castro regime has attached to incorporating Cuban youth into the Revolution is indicated by the fact that the Rebel Youth Association (AJR) was the first mass organization to be established. In early 1959, Major Camilo Cienfuegos, then chief-of-staff of the Rebel Army, created the General Directorate of Culture of the Rebel Army (which later that year became the Department of Instruction of the Rebel Army) under the command of Major Ernesto "Che" Guevara. Later in 1959, Guevara ordered the formation of the AJR under the auspices of the Department of Instruction and named as its chief a very young comrade-in-arms named Major Joel Iglesias Leyva. The Rebel Army was chosen as the vehicle for organizing the youth instead of the youth arm of the July 26 Movement (26-JM) because Castro's control of the Rebel Army, unlike the 26-JM, was complete. Members of the 26-JM's urban front were less

interested than Castro in destroying all of the country's old institutions, and in fact, were still challenging his leadership. It was clear from the beginning that the AJR was organized to counterbalance the 26-JM's youth arm within the movement and also to counter the influence among Cuba's young people of organizations such as the Revolutionary Directorate and the Popular Socialist (Communist) Party's youth arm, the Socialist Youth.

The AJR was formally constituted in January 1960, and after it had received a suitable buildup and the public blessing of the regime's top leaders, it assumed for itself the role of sole representative of all of Cuba's young people. On October 21, 1960, this predominance was recognized by the Socialist Youth, the Revolutionary Directorate, the Peasant Youth Organizations, the Confederation of Secondary Students, and the 26-JM when their representatives agreed to merge all these youth groups with the AJR. The AJR then began the complex process of reorganization required to assimilate these groups. The following April, at its First National Congress, the AJR changed its name to the Young Communists' League (UJC). In October of the same year, the UJC "became the vanguard organization of Cuban youth, with a strict, more selective character and more rigorous requirements for the admission of new members. It was to adopt the Leninist principles of organization and define itself as the juvenile organization of the Communist Party."

Long before the merger of the youth groups, Castro had engineered the takeover of one of the most important participants in Cuban political life, the Federation of University Students (FEU). When the University of Havana reopened in early 1959 after it had been closed for more than two years, "old students and new ones, emerging out of the insurrectionary struggle, took provisional charge of the FEU" and set out to transform the University into what they thought it should be. Members of the faculty and students formed a

Reform Commission which organized tribunals to purge the campus of professors, students, and employees who had collaborated with Batista.

Elections were held in October 1959 to replace the provisional officers. The two candidates competing for the FEU presidency were Major Rolando Cubela Secades of the Revolutionary Directorate and Pedro Luis Boitel of the 26-JM. Cubela had served as deputy to Major Faure Chomon Mediavilla, the chief of the Revolutionary Directorate's guerrilla column in southern Las Villas Province in 1958. When Batista fell, Castro gave Cubela the post of military attache in the Cuban Embassy in Madrid, partly to remove a potential opposition leader from the country and partly as a reward for demobilizing his forces in January 1959 when a clash between Castro's troops and those of the Revolutionary Directorate seemed imminent. Cubela had been in his final year of medical school when the university was closed by Batista in 1956, and he had not finished his terminal examination requirements when it was reopened, so he was technically still a student and thus eligible to take part in the elections.

Boitel, on the other hand, had been a member of the 26-JM underground in Havana during the armed struggle and belonged to the urban front of the 26-JM--a segment of the movement that Castro had been unable to dominate as completely as he did the Rebel Army. Although Cubela was popular among the students at the University, Boitel, an enemy of the Communists, was generally expected to win the elections. But Castro intervened in the FEU elections in favor of Cubela. Raul Castro met with the two candidates and with other students before the elections and attempted to get Boitel to withdraw in favor of Cubela for the sake of "unity." To reinforce Cubela's position, Raul selected three unconditional Castro supporters as his running mates: Major Angel Quevedo Valdivia, Ricardo Alarcon y de Quesada, and Jose Rebellon. Education Minister Armando Hart,

himself totally dedicated to Castro, pleaded with Boitel to withdraw, and the day before the elections Fidel himself asked Boitel to step down, calling upon the students to unite and name a president--Cubela--by acclamation rather than by the ballot box. Under this heavy pressure, Boitel convoked a student assembly and offered to withdraw, but the students refused to accept his offer, and the elections were held as scheduled on October 17. Many students, thinking that there would be no election because of Fidel's unity plea, did not vote. With only half of the student body casting ballots, Cubela won by a margin of 52 to 48 percent.

Cubela remained president of the FEU until 1962, when Jose Rebellon, running unopposed, was "elected" to the presidency. It was during Cubela's term that Castro used the FEU, Cubela, and Rebellon as instruments with which to destroy the autonomy of the University of Havana and convert it into a branch of the government. This was done through a combination of political manipulation and naked force that brought to mind memories of the University's earlier days when many of the professors and students carried guns to protect themselves or to eliminate their opponents. In January 1962, after the University had been purged of anti-Castro elements, PSP President Juan Marinello became its rector.

FEU elections were held again in February 1965, and Jaime Crombet, who ran unopposed on a single slate of candidates, was "chosen" to succeed Rebellon. In January 1966, the government discarded the electoral process altogether and reshuffled the FEU leadership, replacing Crombet with Francisco Dorticos, nephew of Cuban President Osvaldo Dorticos. Crombet was not in disgrace; he was needed to head the UJC. The cavalier method of replacing Crombet, even though the action was "approved" later by an assembly of the student body, so damaged the FEU's reputation that the government allowed new elections to be held in December 1966 in an attempt to restore the

FEU's prestige. This time there were two candidates--both, however, carefully selected from the politically safe ranks of the UJC--and former FEU Vice President Enrique Valasco won out by a narrow margin over medical student Juan Vila. An important factor in the government's decision to permit these elections may have been the bizarre developments involving Major Cubela in March 1966. He was apparently involved in a plot of an exile group to assassinate Castro, which was exposed by the Cuban security forces in March. When the prosecutor at Cubela's trial demanded the death penalty, large numbers of students at the University carried on such vigorous demonstrations for Cubela that troops allegedly had to be sent to occupy the University buildings.

The student demonstrations may also have been a factor in leading the government a year later to disband the Secondary Students League, merge the FEU with the UJC to form the UJC-FEU University Committees, and conduct an internal shake-up of the UJC. The net effect was to strengthen the UJC organizational structure and to enable it--in theory, at least--to exert greater control over the university students by means of the UJC-FEU; over the high school students via the Jose Antonio Echeverria Brigades (which had replaced the Secondary Students League); and over the grade school students through the Cuban Pioneers League (UPC).

As the sugar harvest of 1970 drew closer, more and more attention was diverted from basic organizational work in the mass organizations. The youth and student groups were no exceptions. Many young people had become disenchanted with the Revolution and had done little to advance its programs. Some went through the unpleasant experience of the Military Units for Aid to Production from late 1965 to mid-1968, but the UMAP program probably accomplished very little in the way of their "rehabilitation". Still others were apparently turned off in the latter half of 1968

when strong-arm recruiting methods were used to enlist "volunteers" for the Centennial Youth Column which, to all intents and purposes, was the replacement for the UMAP. These and other young people whose parents or families had suffered directly in the Revolutionary Offensive carried out in the spring and summer of 1968 took out their frustrations by indulging in senseless acts of vandalism. The ripping off of hand pieces from public telephones in Havana enjoyed great popularity for awhile, becoming all the more enticing when government spokesmen became incensed. Vandalism in high schools increased, and the situation became so serious that Castro, during his annual speech to honor the CDRs on September 28, 1968, complained that more than 75 specific "acts of sabotage" had been committed since the beginning of the year.

In a critical analysis of the deficiencies of the UJC in handling Cuban youth during this period, UJC First Secretary Jaime Crombet admitted in early 1971 that Cuba was having problems with its young people and that some of the trouble was a "reflection of weaknesses of our organization (the UJC), errors committed by it, bad methods, and so forth." He said that changes were being made in the UJC structure to rectify the situation and announced that the FEU would again be independent of the UJC. The latter would concern itself mainly with ideological matters at the universities, while the former would serve as a mass organization, concentrating on cultural and educational functions and on sports and recreation. A new organization, the High School Students Federation (FEEM), would be created, but would avoid two pitfalls that had doomed its predecessor, the Secondary Students League: the FEEM would depend on its own ranks, rather than on the high school faculty, to provide leadership; and it would be led by non-professionals passing through the educational system rather than by permanent or semi-permanent professional cadres. The UJC was also divested of the UPC, which became autonomous, although still under the leadership of the UJC. These major changes in the structure of the youth organizations were

proposed, discussed, and approved at a high-level education meeting of the UJC held in Jaimanitas in early December 1970 to work out details of the "democratization" changes Fidel had ordered in July.

Thus, the Cuban youth have the UPC, the FEEM, and the FEU as mass organizations to guide them through school from the second grade through the university, and the UJC, with its much more restricted membership, to select and prepare those young people who appear to be promising prospects for eventual party membership and key government posts. The FEU and UJC are weak institutions in that they do not genuinely represent their membership despite the "democratization" in late 1970 and early 1971 (the same faces dotted the leadership after the elections as had appeared before them, and in many cases the elections had only one slate of candidates). The FEEM is weak because the leadership at the base is composed of students in the 12 to 19 year old age bracket; except for those selected and groomed by the regime for leadership positions in the organization's upper levels, they are obviously inexperienced in politics, organization, and mass communication. The members of the FEEM have the capacity to irritate the government through individual activities that have minor nuisance value, but they are not capable of exerting any significant influence on the government through the FEEM structure.

The university students are in a position to influence, though not to pressure, Castro personally, but this is because of Castro's propensity to visit the university campus from time to time and discuss any range of subjects with any students he meets. He obviously goes there as a teacher, but he is undoubtedly stimulated by his off-the-cuff conversations and uses the occasions as a means of testing the pulse of the younger generation. The UJC, however, is no more able to put pressure on Castro than is the FEU. The UJC is an adjunct of the party and is important only in that role.

Its leaders are not politically important in their own right. They command no following and are little more than mechanical bureaucrats who can easily be replaced. Their function is to carry out and pass on orders, not to originate them.

CHAPTER FOUR: THE SINGLE POLITICAL PARTY

Origin

The only political party in Cuba today is the Cuban Communist Party (PCC). It was formally introduced to the Cuban people in October 1965--after more than three years in its formative stages--and had its origin in the July 26 Movement, the prerevolutionary Communist party, called the Popular Socialist Party (PSP), and the Revolutionary Directorate. In the process of forming the single political body, none of these three groups was able to achieve a preeminent position, although the PSP, or "old" Communists as its members came to be known, made a vain attempt to take control in 1962. The three were ostensibly chosen because they were the only forces that took an active part in the military phase of the Revolution--the guerrilla war against Batista.

This official explanation, however, overlooks historical facts and ignores the efforts of some Autenticos, certain allegedly apolitical groups, and sectors of Batista's military establishment that had all played a role in the armed struggle. The Autenticos, for example, with financial backing from ex-president Carlos Prio, had made some valiant but futile attempts to overthrow Batista by force of arms. There was also the Second National Front of the Escambray--a mixed bag of Autenticos, Ortodoxos, and dissident members of the Revolutionary Directorate led by Eloy Gutierrez Menoyo--which had a guerrilla column operating in southern Las Villas Province for almost 14 months prior to Batista's collapse. In addition, members of Batista's officer corps had plotted and finally paid dearly for their vain attempts, including the naval revolt in September 1957, against the dictator. A number of members from all of these groups were, at one time or another, incorporated into the pro-Castro forces but this was done on an individual basis with no regard to the organization from which they came.

The Communists, on the other hand, had done precious little in the anti-Batista struggle that could qualify them for special treatment. Indeed, their persistent rejection of guerrilla warfare as the proper method of unseating the dictator and their frequent public denigration of the guerrillas' efforts would seem to have excluded them from any of the spoils of victory. For a number of reasons, however, the PSP was welcomed by Castro. It had a well organized and disciplined apparatus, that might have presented dangerous opposition in the chaotic early years of the Revolution. These same qualities, on the other hand, could be extremely valuable assets in consolidating the power of the Revolution's leadership. The party could be especially useful in establishing communications with the USSR and in verifying the political bona fides of the Revolutionary leadership. Castro was quite aware that the radical policies that he planned to adopt to end the political, social, and economic domination of Cuba by the US might bring a sharp reaction from Washington and that he might need Soviet support.

The July 26 Movement, which Castro had begun to organize while still imprisoned for the Moncada barracks assault, could not legitimately be excluded from the new political organization after having borne the lion's share of the burden in the struggle against Batista--and besides it was needed to counterbalance the PSP. The Revolutionary Directorate was included, not because of any outstanding role in the fight against the dictatorship--its guerrilla warfare contribution was decidedly minor--but because it represented a significant segment of the highly politicized student masses which Castro at that time could not afford to alienate.

The inclusion of the Revolutionary Directorate was largely symbolic; Faure Chomon, Rolando Cubela, and a few others of its top personalities were brought into the upper echelons of the party of the government as window dressing, but the Revolutionary Directorate itself, denuded of its leadership, gradually passed into oblivion. The same treatment

was accorded certain sectors of the July 26 Movement--mainly those that had been involved in urban resistance--that displayed any indication of independent thought or action; positions of importance were instead awarded mainly to members of the movement who had participated in the guerrilla campaign and had demonstrated their willingness to submit totally to Castro's leadership. The result was the formation of what has been called a "guerrilla elite" that dominates the PCC, the administration, and the security forces, and is responsible for the formulation and execution of the regime's policies.

Unlike the Revolutionary Directorate, the PSP has not disappeared nor has it, like the July 26 Movement, lost its identity. Its formal structure has been dissolved and its hierarchy has been absorbed into the PCC, but it still retains certain characteristics of a separate political entity, partly because of its historical affiliation with a major foreign power and partly because some of its members have on two occasions been involved in political machinations that were judged to be inimical to the best interests of the PCC. The PSP will probably not be dispelled until its aging leadership dies.

The "Old" Communist Party

The PSP dates back to August 16, 1925, when 17 men met in Havana to form what was called the Communist Party (Cuban Section of the Third International). The 17 included four guests, an adviser from the Communist Party of Mexico sent by the Third International, and 12 delegates who represented the Havana Communist Group, the San Antonio de los Banos Communist Group, the Hebrew Section of Havana, and the Hebrew Cuban Youth. The six groups represented at this modest gathering had a combined membership of about 80, and even if the membership of the absent Communist cells in Palma Soriano, Media Luna, Bayamo, and Guantanamo were added to that figure, the total number of Cuban Communists was only about a hundred.

From this humble beginning, the Communist Party expanded, concentrating its efforts in the field of organized labor. By 1939, it had achieved control of the labor movement as a result of a deal with Batista. Batista granted the party legal status in 1938, and in 1939 it merged with the Revolutionary Union Party, the front it had created in 1937, to form the Communist Revolutionary Union Party. The party, which supported Batista in his successful bid for the presidency in 1940, won ten seats in the national Chamber of Deputies; more than a hundred seats in city councils throughout Cuba and the mayoralty elections in Manzanillo and Santiago, Cuba's second largest city. In March 1943, Batista appointed the party's president, Juan Marinello, to his cabinet as Minister without Portfolio, and later in his term gave a similar appointment to another top Communist, Carlos Rafael Rodriguez. During World War II, the Party again changed its name, this time to the Popular Socialist Party, the name it was to retain until the merger under Castro.

The merger of the PSP, the Revolutionary Directorate, and the July 26 Movement into the Integrated Revolutionary Organizations (ORI) was not accomplished smoothly. When "old" Communist Anibal Escalante Dellunde was appointed organizing secretary of ORI in 1962, he tried to take advantage of his position to place "old" Communists in strategic posts throughout the ORI structure in the hope of seizing control and relegating Castro to the role of a figurehead. When Castro became aware of Escalante's intentions in March of that year, he delivered a bitter attack on nationwide radio and television, denouncing Escalante's "sectarianism" and accusing him of attempting to build a personal political machine divorced from the masses. The pro-Castro forces then instituted a wide-ranging purge of Escalante appointees and other "undesirables," including four of the Party's six provincial chiefs and most of the local bosses. Escalante wisely fled to Eastern Europe and left Castro to set about rebuilding the party from the ground up.

The "New" Communist Party

The party-building process continued into 1963, when the ORI initials were discarded in favor of PURSC, the United Party of the Cuban Socialist Revolution. The PURSC, too, was only a temporary organization; in October 1965 it gave way to the Cuban Communist Party. One striking difference between the PCC and the ORI was the structure at the top level. The ORI had a National Directorate of only 25 people of whom 11 were "old" Communists, 12 were followers of Fidel from the 26-JM, one was from the Revolutionary Directorate, and one--Osvaldo Dorticos--had worked for both the PSP and the 26-JM. In contrast, the PCC Central Committee was made up of 100 members, the vast majority of whom were from the 26-JM (mainly those who had served in guerrilla columns rather than in the urban apparatus) and only a relative handful from the PSP and the Revolutionary Directorate. Moreover, none of the long-time members of the PSP was included in the eight-man Political Bureau that headed the Central Committee. The PCC's secretary of organization was Armando Hart Davalos, who had helped Fidel form the 26-JM in 1955 and who was married to one of the two women activists who took part in the Moncada barracks attack with Fidel. Castro had learned the lesson of the Escalante affair very well.

The membership of the Central Committee is basically the same today as it was in October 1965. Although no new names have been added, and none is likely to be until the PDC undergoes a major overhaul in 1975, the number of members has declined. One member, Major Efigenio Ameijeiras, then an Armed Forces Vice Minister, was removed from the Party and stripped of his military rank and position on March 17, 1966, for dissolute behavior. In 1967, three Central Committee members, Major Juan Vitalio Acuna Nunez, Major Antonio Sanches Diaz, and Captain Eliseo Reyes Rodriguez, died in Bolivia while serving in Che Guevara's guerrilla column. Two more members, Ramon Calcines Gordillo and Jose Matar, fell victim to the "microfaction"

purge in January 1968. In July 1971, Major Eddy Sunol Ricardo, in very poor health, committed suicide. The ailing Alfredo Tabur died on March 24, 1973, and cancer claimed the life of Lazaro Pena on March 11, 1974. Since then, the Central Committee's membership has remained at 91.

The number of members of the Central Committee is unimportant so long as the political ratio remains relatively unchanged. In practice this body has been only a rubber stamp for approving policies and decisions already made in the Political Bureau. If a situation arises in which the Cuban Government wishes to give the appearance that the country is wholly united behind Castro in the face of a threat or in support of a particular policy, a statement on the subject will be released in the name of the Central Committee. If no such appearance of national unity is needed, the statement is made by Castro or some other official. The Committee does give its advice to Castro on major issues and sometimes serves as a collective sounding board for Castro's musings. It would undoubtedly assume major political importance should both Fidel and Raul Castro disappear from the scene. The Central Committee would then become much more articulate, as personalities emerged from the suffocating domination of the Castros and in contrast to the present dogmatic approach, policy options would become much broader. Individuals and long dormant political factions would emerge to try to fill the leadership vacuum, and alliances and counteralliances would develop as committee members maneuvered to improve their positions. The "old" Communists could be expected to form an important bloc, but would probably be opposed by the comparatively young military veterans of the Sierra Maestra campaign, who seem to bear little affection for their aging ex-PSP comrades. Rather than one eliminating the other, the two groups would probably reach a working agreement under the nominal leadership of President Dorticos, a Political Bureau member, or one of the professional military men trained by

the Soviets. Under present circumstances, however, the Central Committee seems satisfied to abjure a leadership role and follow obediently the dictates of Fidel and Raul.

The Political Bureau

The heart of the Central Committee is the Political Bureau. It is here that major issues are discussed, although it goes without saying that, just as in the Central Committee, it is Fidel who dominates, and his comrades have little chance of forcing him to reverse a position once he has taken a determined stand. The Political Bureau is particularly useful to Fidel because it helps him avoid the charge of creating and maintaining a personality cult, a phenomenon which his style of rule has fostered. Castro took advantage of this camouflage capability in the months after his speech of July 26, 1970. When he showed up at various meetings and conferences to monitor the democratization process or to exchange ideas with the rank and file or how to solve workers' problems and improve production and productivity, he invariably flanked himself with as many Political Bureau members as he could reasonably muster, presenting a facade of collective leadership.

In addition to Fidel and Raul, the Political Bureau is composed of Major Guillermo Garcia, a native of Oriente Province, whose main claim to fame is that he was the first peasant to join Fidel's guerrillas in the Sierra Maestra; Major Juan Almeida, a shrewd and capable Negro who was at Fidel's side at Moncada, during his imprisonment on the Isle of Pines, in the Granma Expedition in late 1956, and through most of the two-year guerrilla campaign in the Sierra Maestra; Major Ramiro Valdes, a tough and cunning native of Artemisa, Pinar del Rio Province, whose association with Fidel parallels that of Almeida; Major Sergio del Valle, a successful medical doctor who forsook his career to join Castro's Rebel Army in the Sierra

Maestra; Armando Hart, a co-founder with Fidel and others of the 26-JM, who, unlike many comrades who served on the urban front, is totally committed to Fidel; and President Osvaldo Dorticos, an intelligent economist who once ran for a minor office on a PSP ticket, but later became a 26-JM adherent in the city of Cienfuegos. Dorticos has been president ever since July 1959 and is one of Castro's top economic advisers. Hart served as education minister from January 1959 to October 1965, when he assumed the duties of secretary for organization of the new PCC. After the disappointing 1970 sugar harvest, he went to Oriente Province to try to help Almeida bring political and economic order out of the chaos there, and now is party first secretary in the province. Almeida has served in many key military positions, including chief of the ground forces, deputy chief of the Armed Forces Ministry (MINFAR), acting armed forces minister (while Raul Castro was attending high-level social, political, and economic courses taught by Soviets), chief of all construction activity, and finally Political Bureau delegate in Oriente Province. Sergio del Valle also held various high posts in the MINFAR, including vice minister and chief of the General Staff. He succeeded Ramiro Valdes as Interior Minister in July 1968. Valdes had headed the Interior Ministry from its formation in 1961 until he left to take the same special training courses that Raul Castro, Almeida, and del Valle had already attended. Valdes then served briefly as first vice minister of MINFAR and now is a vice prime minister of virtue of his position as chief of the Construction Sector. Guillermo Garcia, not generally noted for his intellectual capacity, has nevertheless served in high military posts and has held seats on the National Directorates of ORI and PURSC. Until 1970, he was party chief in Oriente Province. He is now head of the Transportation and Communication Sector with the rank of vice prime minister.

In July 26, 1970, Castro promised to create a Central Committee Bureau of Social Production on a level with the Political Bureau, but nothing has been heard of such a body within the party since

that time. His promise led to hopes that, in light of the complex economic problems stemming from the sugar harvest, he might finally be willing to share responsibility for administrative and economic affairs with others more qualified than he in these fields. Although Fidel instinctively rejects any thought of permitting the least amount of authority to slip from his grasp, the seriousness of Cuba's economic situation and the widespread public disenchantment resulting from the failure to achieve what he had been hailing for years as a critical national goal seemed to have impressed upon him the sterility of his insistence on governing a country of eight-and-one-half million people in the same personal fashion that a feudal baron might have ruled his estate in the Middle Ages. Castro, his self-confidence shaken, withdrew behind a protective screen of party chiefs for several months while conducting a frenzied reorganization of all the mass organizations except the FMC, which was run by Raul's wife. At about the same time, changes in the government were effected which suggested that a wholesale restructuring was under way and that Castro, while eschewing any significant shift of power, was at least becoming more amenable to advice, particularly that from the Soviets. Relations with the USSR warmed appreciably and Fidel, President Dorticos, and Carlos Rafael Rodriquez conferred at length with top Soviet economic and planning officials.

As time passed, Fidel concerned himself more and more with foreign affairs, content to leave domestic matters to his subordinates. He not only squired Alexei Kosygin and many other top ranking foreign officials around Cuba, but also found time to visit Chile, Peru, and Ecuador in 1971 and the USSR (twice), East Germany, Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, Romania, Algeria, Morocco, Sierra Leone, and Guinea in 1972. In 1973, he went to the Conference of Nonaligned Nations in Algiers and also visited Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago, Guinea, Iraq, India, North (and allegedly a portion of South) Vietnam, and Czechoslovakia. His guest list so far in 1974 has included Leonid Brezhnev, East Germany's Erick Honecker, Algeria's Houari Boumediene, and North Vietnam's Pham Van Dong. Fidel's approval is

undoubtedly still necessary for all important domestic decisions, political or economic, but his pervasiveness--and therefore his meddlesome bungling--has been reduced considerably.

Reorganizing the Government

Although his promise to create a Bureau of Social Production within the party never was fulfilled, a parallel body was introduced into the regime's administrative branch. This new body--the Executive Committee of the Council of Ministers--was finally made public on November 24, 1972, after two years of study and development. Before the shake-up, the Council of Ministers consisted of about two dozen cabinet members of ministerial rank. The main feature of the revamped Council is the newly created Executive Committee, which is headed by Fidel as prime minister and Raul as first vice prime minister and is staffed by seven vice prime ministers and President Dorticos. These ten men supervise the cabinet, which was expanded to include 27 positions of ministerial rank. In addition, some 17 other autonomous institutes and agencies were subordinated to the Council. The revitalization of the Council created a semblance of order out of the chaotic conglomeration of independent governmental agencies, established a definitive administrative chain of command, and created a board of super-managers to oversee the complex business of government.

Although the reorganization did not gain momentum until long after Fidel's plaintive speech of July 26, 1970, the first cautious steps toward administrative changes seem to have been taken in 1969, when Major Juan Almeida was appointed Political Bureau delegate in charge of supervising the development and execution of all construction projects in Cuba. This super-management post placed Almeida over both the Ministry of Construction, which carried out non-mil-

itary building projects, and the sizeable construction forces of the MINFAR. His appointment as chief of what later was called the "Construction Sector" was apparently an experiment in management aimed at bringing under one individual the diverse and often autonomous elements involved in a particular industry. Almeida, who later left the position to become political chief of Oriente Province, and his successor, Ramiro Valdes Menendez, carried out a wholesale restructuring of the industry which led to the liquidation of the Ministry of Construction and the creation of four branches at the cabinet level.

After Fidel's speech, references to other economic "Sectors" gradually began to appear in the Cuban press, but, unlike Almeida, the Sector chiefs were no longer described as Political Bureau delegates. This suggests that there had been plans to create a super-management apparatus for directing the economy at the Political Bureau level within the party, but that these plans had been dropped in favor of the formation of the Council of Ministers' Executive Committee. The shift effectively precluded the creation of an organization within Castro's political apparatus that might eventually have developed into a counterbalance to the Political Bureau--the regime's highest element of authority--and could have posed a potential threat to Castro's otherwise unlimited authority. Although counterparts to the Sectors finally appeared in the party structure, they surfaced as separate adjunct commissions (now called departments) of the Central Committee rather than as a single policy-making body. They serve as channels through which the party Secretariat, which was upgraded considerably in the current reorganization, passes the Central Committee's directives to the Executive Committee of the Council of Ministers and monitors for the Central Committee the progress of the government in carrying out these directives.

In creating the new Sectors, priority seemed to have been given to those areas of economic activity that most needed rejuvenation. Thus, "old" Communist and long-time friend of Raul Castro, Major

Flavio Bravo, was assigned to alleviate the perennial headaches of the Consumption and Services Sector; Major Guillermo Garcia, exhausted by his duties as party chief in Oriente Province, was relieved by Major Almeida and given the reins of the Transportation and Communications Sector; and Major Diocles Torralba Gonzalez, another of Raul Castro's proteges, was placed in charge of the Sugar Harvest Sector; one of Raul's former guerrilla column commanders, Major Belarmino Castilla Mas, who in mid-1970 had replaced the ineffective Jose Llanusa as Education Minister, was given a wider mandate to solve the country's mushrooming educational problems by being appointed chief of the Education, Culture, and Sciences Sector.

When the Council of Ministers' Executive Committee was announced in November 1972, other sectors were added. "Old" Communist and Minister without Portfolio Carlos Rafael Rodriguez took charge of the Foreign Relations Sector; Major Pedro Miret, a veteran of the Moncada barracks attack of 1953, was made head of the Basic Industries Sector; and President Dorticos assumed control of the Economic and Administrative Sector. Control of the security forces--i.e., the Armed Forces and Interior Ministries--was placed directly under Fidel, with Raul continuing to serve as Armed Forces Minister. Fidel also was tasked with running several as-yet-unaffiliated organizations related to public health and agriculture, with the expectation that at some unspecified date some of these will be transferred to an Agriculture and Livestock Sector. The various Sector chiefs are unlikely to have sweeping authority to determine policy for their respective industries--this presumably is still left to Fidel and his advisers--and are probably concerned mainly with coordinating and executing whatever policy directives Castro has initiated. Nevertheless, their authority to investigate problems, demand accountings, pinpoint responsibility, suggest remedial action, and coordinate interdependent activities should prove beneficial if they can avoid becoming just another layer of bureaucracy.

Restructuring the Party

While the restructuring of the mass organizations and the government is nearing completion, the revamping of the Party is still in full swing. When the Central Committee was constituted in October 1965, it had, in addition to the Political Bureau, a Secretariat, an Organizing Secretary (Armando Hart), and six commissions: the Foreign Affairs Commission, chaired by Osmany Cienfuegos; the Education Commission, chaired by then Education Minister Armando Hart; the Economic Commission, chaired by President and then Economy Minister Osvaldo Dorticos; the Revolutionary Orientation Commission, chaired by Orlando Fundora; the Constitutional Studies Commission, chaired by "old" Communist Blas Roca; and the Revolutionary Armed Forces and State Security Commission, chaired by Raul Castro. In early 1966, a Labor Commission was added, with another "old" Communist, Lazaro Pena, as chairman.

Of these seven commissions, all but two languished in various degrees of inactivity. Indeed, they may never have been intended to play a significant role, but only to give the appearance of an institutionalized leadership. One of the exceptions was the Revolutionary Armed Forces and State Security Commission, through which Raul controlled not only his own ministry (MINFAR), but also MININT (which includes the National Revolutionary Police, the Border Guard forces, and the foreign and domestic intelligence collection and exploitation services). The other exception was the Revolutionary Orientation Commission--now the Revolutionary Orientation Department--which predated the Central Committee by several years; its main functions were to control the content of public information media, establish and promulgate propaganda guidelines, supervise the indoctrination of the masses, and conduct public opinion polls.

The six-man Secretariat, made up of Fidel and Raul Castro, President Dorticos, two "old" Communists, and ex-Revolutionary Directorate member Faure Chomon,

was responsible for party housekeeping functions. Organizing Secretary Armando Hart was charged with membership and structural responsibilities.

Following the addition of the Labor Commission in 1966, the structure of the Central Committee and its related organs remained undisturbed until late 1970. Since that time, a host of changes has been made, and this process is continuing. The Organizing Secretary, Armando Hart, moved to Oriente Province to assist Major Almeida, and in his place an Organizational Secretariat blossomed with Moncada veteran Jesus Montane Oropesa, a comrade of Fidel's since university days, as its apparent chief. The Organization Secretariat even developed a commission of its own, the Ideological Commission, with "old" Communist Juan Mier Febles on its staff. Added directly to the Central Committee were a Social Work Commission, a Central Organisms Commission, a Transportation Commission, a Construction Commission, a Distribution and Consumption Commission, an Internal Orientation Commission, a Recreation Subcommittee, and a Human Resources Commission. The old Education Commission became the Commission on Education, Culture, and the Sciences,and its former chairman was replaced by Vice Prime Minister Belarmino Castilla Mas.

The Current Party Structure

The latest stage in the restructuring of the party's upper echelons began in early 1973 when the Central Committee's commissions started to appear in the press as "departments." So far, 15 have been identified: the Organization Department, the Department for the Formation of Party Cadres, the Military Department, the Department for Servicing Central Organizations, the Judicial Affairs Department, the Economy Department, the Agriculture-Livestock Department, the Foreign Relations Department, the Sugar Sector Department, the Consumption and Services Department, the Transportation and Communi-

cation Department, the Construction Department, the Education, Science, and Culture Department, the Basic Industry Department, and the Social Work Department.

Many of these new bodies parallel the new economic Sectors while others have functions that are self-evident. They constitute the link between the party and the government through which party decisions and directives are channeled and through which the government keeps the party apprised of the progress of the measures taken to implement these decisions and directives. Each department seems to be the responsibility of a specific member of the party Secretariat, and some Secretariat members must have more than one department under their supervision. The Secretariat, therefore, has assumed a much more significant role in the functioning of the party than it originally had.

Except for the previously mentioned reduction in the membership of the Central Committee, the first change in the personnel of the Central Committee or its attendant bodies--as established in October 1965--was announced in Havana on February 7, 1973, when four new members were added to the Secretariat: Labor Minister Jorge Risquet, Armed Forces Vice Minister for Political Work Major Antonio Perez Herrera, deputy director of the National Fishing Institute Isidoro Malmierca Peoli, and Ambassador to Moscow Raul Garcia Pelaez. All are Central Committee members. Both Risquet and Perez Herrero served under Raul Castro in the war against Batista; Malmierca Peoli was a member of the pre-Castro Communist party; and Garcia Pelaez fought in Fidel's guerrilla column during the revolution. Still another addition to the Secretariat--Vice Prime Minister for Basic Industry Pedro Miret Prieto--was announced in January 1974, bringing its membership to 11, its present total. Miret, a member of the Central Committee, has been closely associated with Castro ever since their student days at Havana University.

The expansion of the Secretariat was probably required by the increased workload the party reorganization placed on its original members. President

Dorticos and Carlos Rafael Rodriguez, for example had been given major duties in the Executive Committee of the Council of Ministers in November 1972. Faure Chomon moved on to political tasks deep in eastern Cuba some time ago, and Blas Roca has been preoccupied for more than three years with the reorganization of Cuba's legal system. Furthermore, the party's first congress has been scheduled for 1975 and the Secretariat, as the party's housekeeping body, must bear much of the responsibility of preparing for it.

Of the five new Secretariat appointees, only one was a member of the pre-Castro Communist party. Castro undoubtedly had the congress in mind when making the selections. He had no intention of letting the "old" Communists gain significant strength in any branch of the party that might have major influence during the critical period of political maneuvering prior to the congress. The Secretariat is now made up of Fidel, Raul, and four men loyal to them; three "old" Communists; one former member of the Revolutionary Directorate; and one--President Dorticos--who held membership in both the pre-Castro Communist party and the pro-Castro 26-JM. Castro, therefore, has as much of an edge in the Secretariat as he has in the Central Committee itself.

CHAPTER FIVE: THE SECURITY FORCES

Guerrilla Origins

The Cuban Revolutionary Armed Forces of today are the outgrowth of the Rebel Army that was formed in the mountains of Oriente Province from December 2, 1959. The nucleus of this army consisted of the 82 men of the Granma Expedition which after the disastrous ambush by Batista's forces at Alegria de Pio on December 5, 1956--only three days after the force returned secretly to Cuba--was almost destroyed. Those of the 82 not killed or captured during the ambush, or summarily executed after captured, dispersed in a dozen or more small parties of three or four men. They wandered through the mountains until chance brought some of them together again. In the regrouped force were about 15 or 20 men, although Castro likes to say there were only 12.

The ragged group took the "offensive" on January 17, 1957, descending from the mountains to attack a small military post at the isolated village of La Plata on Oriente's southern coast. Despite stubborn resistance, the guerrillas managed to overrun the post. Following this modest victory, the nascent Rebel Army continued its hit-and-run tactics, gradually growing in strength by recruiting peasants and assimilating groups of youths from the cities.

By July 1957, the Rebel Army had grown to some 80 to 100 men, a large enough group for Castro to create a second guerrilla unit, dubbed Column Number Four to confuse the enemy. He placed the new unit under the command of Che Guevara. The Rebel Army continued to grow. By February 1958, it numbered about 350, or enough for Castro to establish two more units, Column Number Six "Frank Pais" and Column Number Three "Mario Munoz." The latter was sent to operate near El Cobre west of Santiago de Cuba under the command of Major Juan Almeida. The former, under Raul's command, was dispatched to the northeast to open up a second front and carry the war to the eastern half of the province.

Once on his own, Raul demonstrated a remarkable ability to organize; despite his youthful appearance, he was able to earn the respect and close cooperation of other guerrilla groups which had been operating independently in the area. By the time Batista fled ten months later, Raul was commanding six rebel columns and an air force of 12 aircraft, and was in control of approximately 12,000 square kilometers of territory. His forces inflicted 1,979 casualties on the Batista forces, while suffering only a little more than 160 dead of its own, captured 1,216 weapons, shot down three planes, and destroyed or captured 31 posts and garrisons.

During the same period, Raul had created a civil administration that included Departments of Education (under Asela de los Santos), Propaganda (Jorge Serguera Riveri), Public Works (Oriente Fernandez), Public Health (Jose Ramon Machado Ventura), Justice (Augusto Martinez Sanchez), Personnel (Senen Casas Regueiro), Supplies (Julio Casas Regueiro), a Central Treasury, a public force, an Agrarian Bureau (Antonio Perez Herrero), and an organization of over 100 Peasants' Associations (with "old" Communist Jose "Pepe" Ramirez Cruz as secretary general). Raul's Department of Propaganda published 12 issues of a semi-monthly newspaper, Surco, and maintained two mobile and 12 fixed radios for broadcasting and for point-to-point contact with Fidel in the Sierra Maestra and with Miami, Mexico, and Venezuela. More than 200 schools and 40 hospitals were established in the ten months of the Second Front's existence. A bomb factory was set up to service the guerrilla air force, and arms plants, tailor shops for making uniforms, and shoe factories were created. When the war ended, Raul was operating a veritable state within a state and was providing more services to the people of the area than Batista ever had.

In the Sierra Maestra, following the departure of Raul and Almeida, Fidel called for a general strike throughout the nation, but because of poor coordination, lack of popular support, and barbaric counter-measures by the Batista regime, it was a disastrous failure. Batista countered with a massive

offensive against Castro's mountain headquarters, but the government troops lacked the will to fight and the operation failed. By mid-summer 1958, Castro was on the offensive himself, sending two guerrilla columns led by Camilo Cienfuegos and Che Guevara across Camaguey and into Las Villas Province where, joined by local forces, they put the coup de grace to the Batista era at year's end by capturing Santa Clara and an armored train that the President had sent to relieve the city. Two columns left the Sierra Maestra to set up a fourth front in northwest Oriente, and by the time Batista fled from Cuba early on New Year's Day 1959, almost all of Oriente and Las Villas Provinces was in rebel hands. In addition, a small guerrilla force under Major Dermedio Escalona was operating in Pinar del Rio Province in the name of the 26-JM.

After The Victory

The January victory was followed by land reform in May, and many of the Rebel Army's officers quickly found themselves in charge of large segments of agriculture or cattle raising acreage without the slightest knowledge of how to use it. A number of other officers of the Rebel Army disappeared from the scene in one way or another. Major Paco Cabrera lived through the guerrilla war only to die in an accident while accompanying Fidel on a brief trip to Venezuela in late January 1959; Major Felix Pena, a guerrilla combatant for 22 months who had presided on the court which tried and acquitted 22 Batista airmen in early 1959, committed suicide shortly after Fidel overturned the court's verdict, retried the airmen, and gave them long prison sentences; Major Delio Gomez Ochoa, who rose in the guerrilla ranks to head the rebels' fourth front in the final days of the struggle, fell into disfavor and as punishment was ordered to accompany the mixed Cuban-Dominican guerrilla force on its invasion of the Dominican Republic, where he was captured in June 1959; Major Pedro Diaz Lanz, chief of the Rebel Air Force, quickly became disenchanted with the new regime and went into exile in mid-1959; Major Huber Matos, as upset as Diaz Lanz with the direction the Revolution was taking, tendered his resignation but, along with his entire staff, was tried and convicted

of counterrevolutionary activity; one of Matos' subordinates, upon hearing of Matos' arrest, committed suicide; Major Camilo Cienfuegos, the army chief of staff who arrested Matos, disappeared on October 28, 1959, while returning to Havana by air from Matos' headquarters in Camaguey.

These and other losses to a small army already stretched dangerously thin moved the new regime to enter more than 100 cadets in the military school at Managua in June 1959 and a smaller number at the Mariel Naval Academy three months later in an effort to bolster its over-taxed officer corps through the training of cadres untainted by service to Batista. To institutionalize the regime's military, the National Revolutionary Militia (MNR) was founded, and the Defense Ministry was replaced by the Revolutionary Armed Forces Ministry (MINFAR) in October 1959. Raul Castro was named to head the new ministry, and Rogelio Acevedo, a young member of Che's guerrilla column during the rebellion, was appointed chief of the MNR in January 1960. Later the same year, in September, a school was set up in Matanzas to train militia cadres, and the following month the class of cadets at Managua was graduated early in expectation of an invasion by US sponsored exiles.

The MNR was mobilized on December 31, 1960, to await the invasion and remained in a state of alert until January 20, inauguration day in the US. The MNR was then directed against counterrevolutionary bands that had taken to the mountains in southern Las Villas Province and, under the command of Major Diocles Torralba Gonzalez, conducted a counterinsurgency campaign in the Escambray region. During the invasion in April 1960, the MNR was sent to repulse the landing at Playa Giron. The students at the Matanzas militia cadre school was dispatched to the scene of battle, and many were killed. The decisive action of the minuscule Revolutionary Air Force in sinking the invaders' supply and support ships isolated the attacking force and permitted the militia to overwhelm it within 72 hours of the disembarkation.

The MNR returned to the struggle against the guerrilla bands until it was replaced by new units, called the Anti-Bandit Brigades (LCBs), that had been established on July 3, 1962. While the LCBs conducted a mop-up of the stubborn guerrilla forces, the regular military units were expanded as rapidly as new men could be trained. Large amounts of military equipment and weapons arrived from Eastern Europe in a steady flow, and following the missile crisis of October 1962, much of the materiel provided by the Soviet forces was turned over to the Cubans as fast as they could assimilate the technology. Motor torpedo boats, submarine chasers, and fast launches firing surface-to-surface missiles were turned over to the Cuban Revolutionary Navy on August 3, 1963, and by 1965 the Cubans had assumed responsibility for all weapon systems left by the departed Soviet troops. Also in 1963, several cadet schools were established to provide a steady flow of officers for service in tank, infantry, artillery, and communications units, and the General Maximo Gomez Advanced Basic School was founded to prepare armed forces command cadres for high-level assignments in a military establishment rapidly become more and more complex. In November, Raul proposed a law of obligatory military service and in December the work of creating party cells in the armed forces was begun in a unit in eastern Cuba.

A Society Militarized

The first draft call came in April 1964, and as a result of the influx of recruits, new military units were created. Three new units in the Havana area were formed in the first half of 1965--the Armored Division, the Independent Army Corps of the East, and the Independent Army Corps of the West--and specialist schools were established by the various services to meet the need for trained technicians at the enlisted level. In 1966, the Armored Division became the Armored Corps and another new unit, the Havana Defense Troops Group, was formed. Also in 1966, the Military Technological Institute for training officers and technicians was opened, using

facilities of the old Colegio Belen, Fidel's alma mater; the Carlos Ulloa Aviation Cadets School was founded at San Julian in western Pinar del Rio Province; and the first of seven Camilo Cienfuegos Military Schools was established at Playa Baracoa, near Havana, to provide boys between the ages of 11 and 19 with an education at the junior and senior high school levels. The Camilo Cienfuegos Military Schools, which teach children who intend to make a career of military service, are operated by the MINFAR vice ministry for training and are the responsibility of Captain Asela de los Santos, the same woman who served as head of Raul Castro's Department of Education in Oriente during the guerrilla war in 1958. The schools are now co-educational; the first girls were admitted in the fall of 1969. The schools are the source of most of the students who enter the various cadet schools and the Military Technological Institute.

As the years passed, the military's influence began to be felt more and more throughout the country. Military men appeared in increasing numbers in the sugar harvest management, in industry, in education, in autonomous agencies, in the Council of Ministers, and in top party positions. In 1968, for example, the Political Bureau delegate system appeared. It apparently was designed to be a supermanagement system in which delegates named by the Political Bureau assumed supreme authority in a geographical area or, in one case, a particular industry. In all, seven Political Bureau delegates were appointed--for Oriente, Camaguey, Matanzas, and Pinar del Rio provinces, for the Isle of Pines and the Holguin regions, and for the Construction Industry. All seven posts were filled by majors.

Eight of the ten changes that took place in the Council of Ministers between 1967 and mid-1972 involved military men. In five cases, a military man replaced a civilian: in one, a military man replaced another military man; and in two, a civilian was replaced by another civilian. In no case was a military man replaced by a civilian. The trend was the same in autonomous agencies. The director of the Cuban Broadcasting Institute, Aurelio Martinez, who

was in charge of all radio and television broadcasting in Cuba, was replaced in May 1967 by Major Jorge Serguera Riveri, who headed Raul Castro's Department of Propaganda in Oriente in 1958. Until the government reorganization announced in November 1972, the heads of all five of the new economic sectors discussed earlier were also majors. The Che Guevara Land Clearing Brigade, formed in late 1967, was led by army personnel and had a military structure, with rigid military discipline. When the National Agricultural and Livestock Development Agency (DAP) was formed in mid-1968, it was patterned along the same lines as the Che Guevara Brigade, which it later absorbed. Chief of DAP is another officer, Major Mario Oliva Perez. Militarization also hit the sugar industry and hit it hard. The UMAP units already discussed were a product of MINFAR's effort to expand its role in the national economy, and when the UMAP system fell into disrepute and had to be replaced during the early stages of the 1968 sugar harvest, it was MINFAR that filled in with thousands of troops in what was called Operation Mambi. Operation Mambi lasted from early 1968 until August of the same year, when the first units of the newly formed Centennial Youth Column (CJC) arrived in Camaguey Province to relieve the soldiers. In keeping with the trend of the times, this new organization too was formed along military lines; it included military training in its activities, was staffed in part by officers, and depended heavily on military discipline. CJC members who served in the column for a full three years were credited with fulfillment of their military draft requirement.

The entire harvest in Oriente Province was turned over to military management in 1968 in what was announced as a test plan. If the military establishment could succeed in Oriente, the plan was to be adopted in Oriente, Camaguey, and Las Villas provinces for the 1969 harvest and in all six provinces for the 1970 harvest. There were many modifications following the 1968 harvest and the plan was not fully implemented throughout Cuba, but many of its features, such as complex "agricultural command posts" and large-scale participation by the troops, were continued

in the later harvests. Much of the harvest remains in military hands today, with primary responsibility resting with the chief of the Sugar Harvest Sector, Major Diocles Torralba Gonzalez. Massive military participation became so necessary for the harvests that to avoid any further impairment of combat readiness, new military units, called Permanent Infantry Divisions (DIP), were established in 1971 to serve as a permanent agricultural labor force. The men of these units received basic infantry training, but spent most of their time in agricultural work; most were involved in the sugar harvest, but many worked with rice, coffee, viands, or in construction. The DIP system was so large that its chief, Major Oscar Fernandez Mell, ranked as a vice minister of MINFAR. The men under his control doubled in August 1973 when the CJC and DIP merged and became the Youth Labor Army.

Education too was a major target to militarization. All technological institutes and senior high schools were taken over by a new MINFAR office (first made public in late 1968), called the Vice Ministry for Military Technological Education. At its head was Major Belarmino Castilla Mas, the former MINFAR vice minister and chief of the General Staff, who had served as chief of one of Raul's six guerrilla columns in 1958. Apparently as a result of considerable international criticism by K.S. Karol and Rene Dumont, among others, Castro tried to disguise the growing influence of the military by shifting Castilla Mas from MINFAR to the Education Ministry, appointing him to replace Education Minister Jose Llanusa in July 1970. Far from reducing military influence, the move completed the militarization of the Education Ministry. Castilla Mas brought with him his MINFAR staff and installed MINFAR's vice minister for training, Major Jose Ramon Fernandez Alvarez, as first deputy education minister, replacing Eduardo Muzio. Furthermore, he removed Muzio from his second responsibility, that of chief of the Education Ministry's adjunct body, the National Cultural Council, and replaced him with another officer, First Lieutenant Luis Pavon Tamayo, who had been editor of the military weekly Verde Olivo when that magazine had engaged

In a lengthy and bitter denunciation of certain Cuban intellectuals whose literary works contained veiled criticism of the regime. This move boded ill for Cuba's intellectual community and indeed the next year one of those who had been attacked by Verde Olivo, Heberto Padilla, was arrested and subjected to strong pressures until he made an agonizing and debasing self-criticism admitting his "counterrevolutionary" faults in front of an assembly of the national professional organization for writers and artists.

Not surprisingly, bringing the military into the Education Ministry resulted in further stress on military training within the educational system. All senior high school and technological institute students, both male and female, received military training at school in addition to their academic subjects and thereby fulfilled their three-year military service obligation while in school. So that the addition of military subjects to the senior high school and technological institute curricula would not be detrimental to the students' academic education, an additional year was added to junior high school. The students who received military training were formed primarily into anti-tank and anti-aircraft artillery gun crews and were destined to serve in that capacity in the event of a military alert.

Emphasis on the Reserves

One of the aims of this student ready-reserve was to enable the regime to reduce the size of its regular force and permit the release of manpower badly needed in the labor force. This suggests that the size of the military establishment has peaked and that military manpower has been cut to a much more reasonable figure. Some of the negative effects of the reduction are being offset by improved technology, which can be assimilated because of the good quality of the technical education system established within MINFAR over the years. Several years ago, Raul Castro complained that in the regime's early days the average Rebel Army officer had only three years of formal education, but he claimed that this

had since been raised to about six years. The educational level has risen higher since then, and, as the Camilo Cienfuegos Military Schools feed more and better trained students into the cadet schools, thus enabling them to raise their standards, it is bound to go higher yet.

One indication that the armed forces have fewer permanent personnel appeared in May 1971, when the General Ignacio Agramonte Officers School in Matanzas closed. The closure, it was announced, was made because the armed forces were now better organized, resulting in an increased capability for modern combat that "has provided us with the chance to reduce the use of human and material resources which are so needed to support the country's economic plans." Shortly thereafter, MINFAR's Osvaldo Sanchez Cabrera School for Political Instructors was also closed. The responsibilities of both institutions were shifted to the General Antonio Maceo Interservice Cadets School at Ceiba del Agua.

Some idea of the size of the reduction in the military that the Cubans had in mind can be gained from figures given by then-deputy chief of the Revolutionary Armed Forces General Staff Major Oscar Fernandez Mell in early 1970. He claimed that one to two percent of the total population is the proper range for the size of a peacetime army, and that 30 to 35 percent of that army should consist of regular forces with the rest reserves. Using the 1970 census figure of 8.5 million as Cuba's total population, Fernandez Mell's lower estimates would mean that Cuba's regular armed forces strength could be as low as 25,500 of a total force, regular and reserve, of 85,000. Fernandez Mell's high estimates would bring the strength of the regular army to as high as 59,500 with a total force of 170,000. Even the higher--and probably more accurate--figures are a reduction of somewhere in the neighborhood of 50 percent, if there is truth to Castro's claim that 100,000 military men could be used in the 1970 sugar harvest with enough left over to maintain the nation's defenses. This explains, of course, why the militarization of education was necessary. If the country's 15,700

Senior high school students, using 1972 statistics, are added to the 29,700 students in technological institutes and to the 30,000 university students who are formed into reserve units, the total eligible student population is 75,400. If those engaged in teacher training are included, as was most likely the case, the number of potential student reservists rises to 102,700.

The militarization was even extended to the junior high schools. In April 1972, some 465 students, male and female, at the Ana Betancourt Junior High School in Camaguey were organized into six companies of student militia under the auspices of the MINFAR, MININT, and Civil Defense. Plans called for members to spend one session a week plus one Sunday per month in training. This co-ed teenagers' militia was established in March 1971 and apparently was expected to spread "spontaneously" to other junior high schools.

Military reserves in Cuba are nothing new. The MCB units used against the counterrevolutionary bands from mid-1962 until the total elimination of the anti-Castro guerrillas three years later evolved into a new irregular-type unit, called the Mountain Troops. These were kept in a reserve status until enemy infiltrations or other threats required their mobilization. The Mountain Troops then evolved into the present "territorial" (i.e., reserve) units--ready reserves that can be called up on very short notice. They are invariably the ones activated for the encirclement of infiltration teams or local counterrevolutionaries, and are an important segment of the Cuban defense establishment.

The Regular Forces

The major elements of Cuba's armed forces are the Revolutionary Navy (MGR), the Air and Air Defense Force (DAAFAR), and the ground forces. The MGR, commanded by Major Aldo Santamaria, in early 1973 received two OSA-class guided-missile fast patrol boats from the USSR to supplement the 18

KOMAR-class guided missile fast patrol boats, 12 SO-1 class submarine chasers, 6 Kronstadt-class submarine chasers, 12 P-6 class fast patrol boats, and 12 P-4 class fast patrol boats that make up the MGR's surface fleet. The DAAFAR, commanded by Major Francisco Cabrera, is made up of the Revolutionary Air Force and the Air Defense. The former, which is equipped primarily with MIG-21 jet aircraft, operates out of three main airfields: San Antonio de los Banos Air Base south of Havana; Camilo Cienfuegos Air Base near Santa Clara in central Cuba; and Frank Pais Air Base at Holguin in eastern Cuba. The Air Defense is composed of the previously mentioned surface-to-air missile units and an unspecified number of anti-aircraft artillery pieces.

The ground forces are made up of three armies (Eastern, Central, and Havana); two independent army corps (Camaguey and Pinar del Rio); two subordinated army corps (the Central Army's Las Villas Army Corps of ready reservists and the Eastern Army's Holguin Army Corps); and many smaller units. Although the Youth Labor Army discussed earlier is alleged to be on a par with the other three armies, it apparently has no matching combat capability and is primarily a labor force.

A considerable amount of information on the Cuban Armed Forces can be gleaned from overt publications, such as the armed forces weekly journal Verde Olivo and the party daily newspaper Granma, but corresponding data on the forces at the disposal of the Interior Ministry are almost non-existent. It is known that these forces include the border guards responsible for protecting Cuba's coastline, the National Revolutionary Police, which handles normal police functions such as traffic control and apprehension of criminals; the State Security troops used mainly in a counterespionage capacity; an Intelligence Directorate for collecting foreign intelligence and carrying out clandestine operations: and other units reponsible for such matters as immigration and population control. Although details are lacking, it is clear that the Interior Ministry and its hierarchy have much in common with the Armed

Forces Ministry and its staff, and there appear to be no major political differences between the two organizations. MININT, of course, is much the junior of MINFAR and would be no match for the latter if ever there were a confrontation. The likelihood of such a conflict is even less likely since Raul Castro, as chairman of the Central Committee's Armed Forces and State Security Commission, is the overriding influence in both ministries.

CHAPTER SIX: THE SCENE TODAY

Of Cuba's pre-revolutionary institutions, the legislature is dead; the last stale remnants of the judiciary have been swept away; private industry has been reduced to a few privately owned fishing boats and a steadily diminishing number of small farms; the old military establishment and the political parties have passed into oblivion; the national federation of labor unions, the unions themselves, and the few professional organizations that have managed to survive are obedient tools of the regime; the press is completely subservient to the government; and the Church, its clergy decimated and its members cowed, has chosen the path of accommodation as the only means of self-preservation. Those few pre-revolutionary institutions still in existence are barely able to keep alive, let alone oppose the regime.

Of the institutions created since 1959, only the security establishment, headed by Fidel and Raul Castro, and the PCC, of which Raul is second secretary, have the organizational strength to exert pressure on the Revolution's "maximum leader," Fidel Castro. Neither has given evidence that it has offered anything but unquestioning and wholehearted support to Fidel, even when his fortunes were at their lowest. The extended trips Fidel has made since his last serious domestic crisis, the harvest of 1970, are a tribute to his confidence in these two institutions as well as a testimonial to the faith he places in Raul.

If formal institutions either lack the capacity to influence Castro, or are unwilling to exercise power they possess, what about the informal institutions? It would appear that here too the potential for opposition is minimal. First let us examine the masses. Most of those people who wanted to leave the island have done so or, failing in that, have reconciled themselves to their plight. When the Varadero-Miami "freedom" flights came to an end, there was no great hue and cry; neither was there any great upsurge in illegal departures. In earlier

days, such was the passion for escape that would-be refugees frequently plunged into Cuba's coastal waters with nothing more than a flimsy raft of timbers and empty oil drums or a few inner tubes sandwiched in a piece of canvas folded over and sewn together. By their actions, these people gave Castro a dramatic vote of no confidence. But that era is over and when it ended Castro reached an important milestone. The Cuban people, with few exceptions, had finally gotten down to the business of making the best of the situation. The exile invasion had failed: guerrilla uprisings had failed; and the security forces seem omnipotent. Passive resistance still is a problem for the regime, but there is no indication that more than a handful of Cubans are working against the government. Most are apathetic, despite the regime's efforts to motivate the workers to "daily heroism" at their place of work.

Even the few exceptions who had refused to accept the Revolution have come around. Some were intellectuals who found the atmosphere suffocating and oppressive, but they now seem to have submitted to the lesson of the Padilla affair in 1971. With the surrender of Padilla, there appear to be no new figures in the Cuban intellectual world with either the stature or the inclination to spark significant opposition to Castro. Neither are there any who might substantially influence policy other than that directly affecting the intellectual community. In fact, Castro has succeeded in capturing as his own the intellectual greats of Cuban history and has identified his regime with them so completely that questioning Fidel or his policies is tantamount to questioning Cuban history and tradition. To his faithful, Castro's Cuba is the Cuba of Jose Marti, Antonio Maceo, Maximo Gomez, Carlos Manuel de Cespedes, and other heroes of the wars against Spain. Even the Indian chief Hatuey, who died at the inquisitor's stake early in the sixteenth century rather than submit to the Spanish "imperialists," is hailed as a precursor of today's revolutionaries, notwithstanding the fact that he invaded Cuba from Santo Domingo only a step ahead of the Spaniards. The importance of Castro's success in linking his Revolution to

Cuba's historical greats and to the Cuban historical process is difficult to overemphasize. He has succeeded in creating an awareness of Cuban nationality that will be almost an insurmountable obstacle to anyone, Cuban or foreigner, who comes to the island with the idea of "saving" the people from Castro or of trying to turn back the clock.

Students in the pre-Castro days were a privileged class with no real responsibilities. They were members of an elite group to whom the leadership of the country would be eventually entrusted. Now the prospects for joining an economically privileged class upon graduating have been diluted or have evaporated altogether. Students can no longer get away with political "hell raising" as they did prior to the Castro era--and as Castro himself did at the University of Havana. In the early days of the Revolution, students were given special privileges: they did not suffer as severely as did the rest of the population from shortages of food, clothing, medical and dental care, or housing; they were exempted from military service; they were given modest sums of spending money; and they were granted recreational facilities and other amenities unheard of elsewhere in the country. But now the life of students has become much more onerous and has lost much of its glamour. All political activity is barred unless it is in support of the government, and political reliability has become the determining factor in admission to centers of advanced education. Work and study are being integrated, and classes are no excuse for failing to help with the harvest or planting or weeding or whatever other agricultural task needs doing. Soon all junior high schools will be boardingschools in the countryside, and half of the student's time will be spent cultivating the acreage given to the school for raising its own food. In senior high schools a student can look forward to three years of military discipline, hardly a pleasing prospect, and after graduation he may have to go to some remote corner of the island, away from the amenities of life, to place his knowledge at the service of the Revolution.

As bleak as this may seem, the students have not crystallized their frustrations and resentments into activity against the regime. Individual acts of vandalism may occur and even with some frequency, but today's students have been raised in an atmosphere different from that existing prior to the Revolution. They do not look upon serious plotting and political activity as an inherent right; they are too young to have remembered pre-revolutionary times and, since their first day of school, they have been subjected to political indoctrination that has developed a way of thinking far removed from that of their parents. They may make formal protests, but the protests are made in harmony with the Revolution, not against it. The Revolution's leaders complain sometimes that the students are more revolutionary than the Revolutionaries, but this is not the type of situation that represents genuine opposition to the government. Although the students, like the rest of the population, may not be entirely happy with their lot, they do not want to risk worsening their positions. In addition, they recognize that the Revolution has brought some genuine improvements to the masses and instead of wanting to reverse or halt this process they would rather speed it up.

If there is opposition to Castro in Cuba today, it is not voiced openly nor is it likely to be dangerous. The security forces have shown themselves to be effective in discouraging the traditional forms of plotting, and no tales of assassination attempts have been heard for quite some time. Castro's greatest threat seems to come from the slow but steady institutionalization that is taking place. Fidel is instinctively wary of anything such as a constitution or a rigid party or governmental structure that might tend to inhibit his freedom of action. He much prefers to govern by communicating directly with the people. Economic reality has made this more and more a luxury that Cuba can ill afford, however, and Fidel has had to weigh his distrust of institutionalization against his country's need for it. He was able to control the process for over a decade but the trend of events, particularly in the past three years, is clearly against him. He has learned

that although old and discredited institutions can easily be destroyed by a torrent of rhetoric from the mouth of a gifted and appealing demagogue, the complex business of government requires that the consequent vacuum be filled with new institutions capable of satisfying a people awakened to greater possibilities and characterized by increased expectations. Moreover, he seems to have come to realize that the flamboyant and freewheeling style of rule that so endeared him to the masses in the early years of his social revolution and enabled him to bury the remnants of the previous government in a morass of words became outdated long ago and, as a result, he has acquiesced in a de-emphasis of his personalistic manner of government in favor of the trappings of a collective leadership.

Since 1970, in particular, Fidel has opted for a more sober definition of his role in Cuban politics. He learned through bitter experience that he cannot master all facets of economic life, that the advice of technical experts must be heeded, and that the business of running a government cannot be left to one man, especially one who often lets whim or wishful thinking determine his actions. He seems to have reconciled himself to less active participation in domestic economic matters and to greater concentration on strengthening and expanding contacts abroad. He has chosen to stifle his ingrained antipathy toward the Soviets as the price of the economic underpinning vital to the preservation of his regime, and he has tailored some of the more abrasive of his domestic and foreign policies so as to reduce friction with Moscow to an acceptable minimum.

He continues to depend heavily on his "guerrilla elite" as the basis for his control over the political apparatus, and this is likely to be a constant factor throughout the life of his regime. He has enough confidence in his ability to command the loyalty of this group that he perceives no threat from one of its key members, his younger brother. Thus he has permitted Raul to accumulate an inordinate amount of power and to assume an ever-expanding leadership role in the hierarchy. While Fidel's impact on Cuban affairs

has diminished--albeit ever so slightly--Raul's has increased markedly. Fidel unquestionably maintains his position as the Revolution's "maximum leader," but Raul is becoming more and more the individual to watch when analyzing Cuban developments.

It was Raul who was the architect of the militarization of Cuban society, and it was through this militarization that Raul's influence spread so pervasively. With the militarization came the elevation of many of Raul's friends and former comrades-in-arms to key positions throughout the government and the party. In the top level of the Armed Forces Ministry, for example, First Vice Minister and chief of the General Staff Senen Casas Requeiro and his brother, Vice Minister for Services Julio Casas Requeiro, held corresponding positions--chief of the personnel department and chief of supplies, respectively--on Raul's staff on the Second Eastern Front in 1958, and two other MINFAR Vice Ministers, Abelardo Colome Ibarra and Rogelio Acevedo Gonzalez, have been linked closely with Raul for years.

Also fighting under Raul's command in 1958 were: Vice Prime Minister for the Sugar Harvest Sector Diocles Torralba Gonzalez; Vice Prime Minister for the Education, Culture, and Sciences Sector Belarmino Castilla Mas, who headed one of Raul's six guerrilla columns; Minister of Transport Antonio Lusson Batlle, another of Raul's guerrilla column chiefs; Eastern Army chief Raul Menendez Tomassevich, yet another guerrilla column commander; Artemisa Territorial Division commander Filiberto Olivera Moya, chief of a guerrilla company; former Armed Forces Vice Minister for Political Work Antonio Perez Herrero, assigned to the Party Secretariat; Labor Minister Jorge Risquet, appointed to the Secretariat with Perez Herrero; First Vice Minister of the Interior Ministry Manuel Pineiro Losada; Interior Ministry General Staff officer Joaquin Mendez Cominches; and Havana Provincial Party First Secretary Jose Ramon Machado Ventura, who headed Raul's old Department of Public Health.

Moreover, "old" Communist and long-time ANAP President Jose Ramirez Cruz served in 1958 as secretary

general of Raul's Peasant Associations and acted as Raul's liaison with the pre-Revolutionary Communist party, and another "old" Communist, Vice Prime Minister for Consumption and Services Major Flavio Bravo Pardo, has had a close association with Raul ever since their student days together at Havana University. In addition, several pre-revolutionary professional military men have risen quickly in the post-revolutionary Armed Forces Ministry and owe their rapid advancement and successful careers to Raul--Education Minister Jose Ramon Fernandez Alvarez is a good example. Raul himself, of course, is Armed Forces Minister, First Vice Prime Minister, Party Second Secretary, and second ranking member (behind Fidel) on the Political Bureau and the Secretariat.

In sum, Raul seems to be creating a "guerrilla elite" of his own, possibly in preparation for the day when the reins of power slip from Fidel's hands into his own. Association with Raul in the guerrilla war, of course, does not necessarily mean that an individual is automatically a "Raulista." Neither is there any evidence that Raul is involved in a "power struggle" in any sense of that term. It is, after all, reasonable to assume that in a developing country short of skilled personnel in all categories, Raul should seek out and promote those people who he personally knows are capable. Nevertheless, the trend toward greater authority for Raul deserves watching.

Should this trend continue unchecked until the first party congress is held next year, Raul, and--by association--Fidel, will be assured of the backing necessary to weather the congress without surrendering significant control of Cuba's political apparatus to those among the leadership--the "old" Communists--who prefer a closer association with Moscow. Because of its Soviet ties, this group has enjoyed a degree of influence out of all proportion to its size. Its fortunes have risen and fallen in unison with the fluctuations in Cuban-Soviet relations. It has never been satisfied, however, with only minority participation in the elements of power and has consistently sought to improve its position--

as in the Escalante affair in 1962--and reduce Fidel to a figurehead. The congress, therefore, gives the "old" Communists a unique opportunity to reverse the pro-Castro bias in the composition of the Central Committee and other top organs of the party and thus open the way to the assumption of complete control of the government.

Prior to the convening of the congress, there is sure to be considerable activity as the competing groups jockey for a position of advantage in hopes of entering the congress with as much leverage as possible. For example, the recent removal of Jorge Serguera Riveri, who headed Raul's old Propaganda Department in the guerrilla days, from his post as czar of all radio and television broadcasting in Cuba raises the suspicion that behind-the-scenes maneuvering by the "old" Communists may have been responsible for his ouster and that others of Raul's entourage may soon suffer the same fate. This is an unlikely scenario, however, and it is highly improbable that such a key personnel change would have been accomplished without the approval of both Raul and Fidel. Fidel still controls the Political Bureau--the entity responsible for top personnel appointments--and he would not make changes against his better judgment unless unusual pressure were brought to bear, and the only source on the Cuban scene capable of exerting that amount of pressure at present is Moscow. The affinity between Moscow and the "old" Communists notwithstanding, the Soviets would hardly go to such extremes for what are relatively low stakes. It would take far more than the elimination of a radio and television czar to give the "old" Communists--and Moscow--a leg up on the guerrilla elite when the congress convenes.

The ability of the "old" Communists to exploit any decline in Fidel's popularity among the masses over the past four years, and the success they have in undermining the influence of the guerrilla elite in the party Secretariat--which presumably will be the office responsible for organizing the congress--will determine to a large degree their ability to isolate the Castro clique and, with the support of

technocrats and opportunists, to emerge as the dominant factor or at least with a much improved standing in the new party structure. There is no strong evidence, however, that Fidel has suffered a dangerous drop in popularity that could be exploited profitably by the "old" Communists. Neither are there indications that any member of the guerrilla elite on the Secretariat is willing to change his political affiliation, so from all appearances it will be largely up to the Soviets to earn for them whatever gains the "old" Communists achieve. Castro, thus, is presently the figure on the domestic scene who will enter the congress in the strongest position.

If Castro retains his strong majority at the congress or even increases it, he will most likely continue to govern as he does now, making few additional fundamental changes unless forced to do so by the demands of the economy. The frenzy of reorganization that began in late 1970 will then have run its course, and Castro, who never wanted the congress in the first place--he has little to gain from it and everything to lose--will presumably have satisfied the demands of his Soviet mentors to place his crown on the line. If, however, Castro perceives the possibility of a significant loss of representation by his guerrilla elite, he may be tempted to conduct another purge of "old" Communists as he did in 1962 and 1968, and his relations with Moscow will suffer accordingly. Such a purge would be feasible because he still enjoys the staunch loyalty of the armed forces and state security apparatus. With his main opponents thus cowed, he could control completely the congress' actions.

A reading of the situation at present indicates that Castro will have little trouble retaining his grip on the reins even if the "old" Communists do make modest gains. As the congress approaches, however, the pressures from Moscow and the maneuverings of the "old" Communists are bound to increase with the expectation that significant gains can be engineered at the expense of the guerrilla elite. Until the congress actually takes place, therefore, Castro may be much more willing than he has been in the past

to take advantage of opportunities to decrease his reliance on Soviet support and expand his contacts with the West. He has given no sign that he would willingly pass the baton of leadership on to someone else and it is safe to assume that if he believed his position to be threatened he would seize the opportunity to strengthen it. The Soviet-sponsored process of institutionalization that is gradually building limits all around Castro may already have convinced him that such a threat indeed exists.